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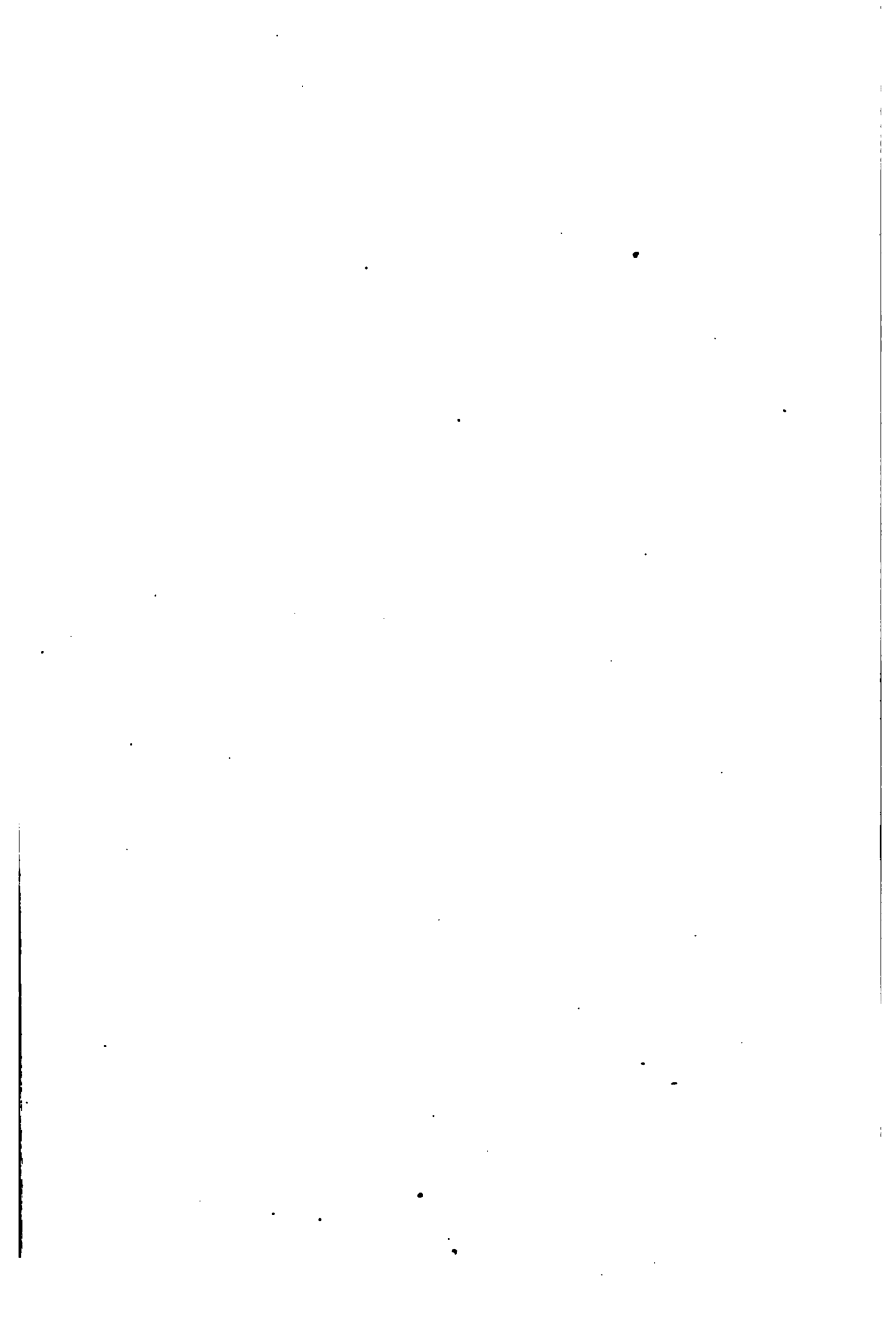
11. Horatio Woodbridge



1. No replies 670

NCW

Woodbridge



DIG:
TWO HEADS WANTED.

A NOVEL.

BY H. HORATIO WOODBRIDGE,

AUTHOR OF

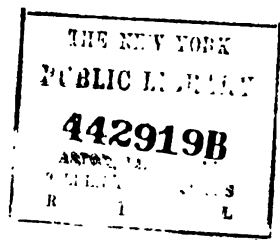
"THE SHOT IN THE EYE," "SNOW WREATH," "MITRE
VERSUS CROWN," "THE SWAMP ANGEL," &c.

*"Truth is stranger than fiction,
Retribution sure as the flight of time."*

JACKSONVILLE, ILL.:
T. D. PRICE & CO., PUBLISHERS

1876.

W. 98



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OCTOBER 6TH.

SEE CHAPTER IX.

TO MY

TRIED AND TRUE FRIENDS,

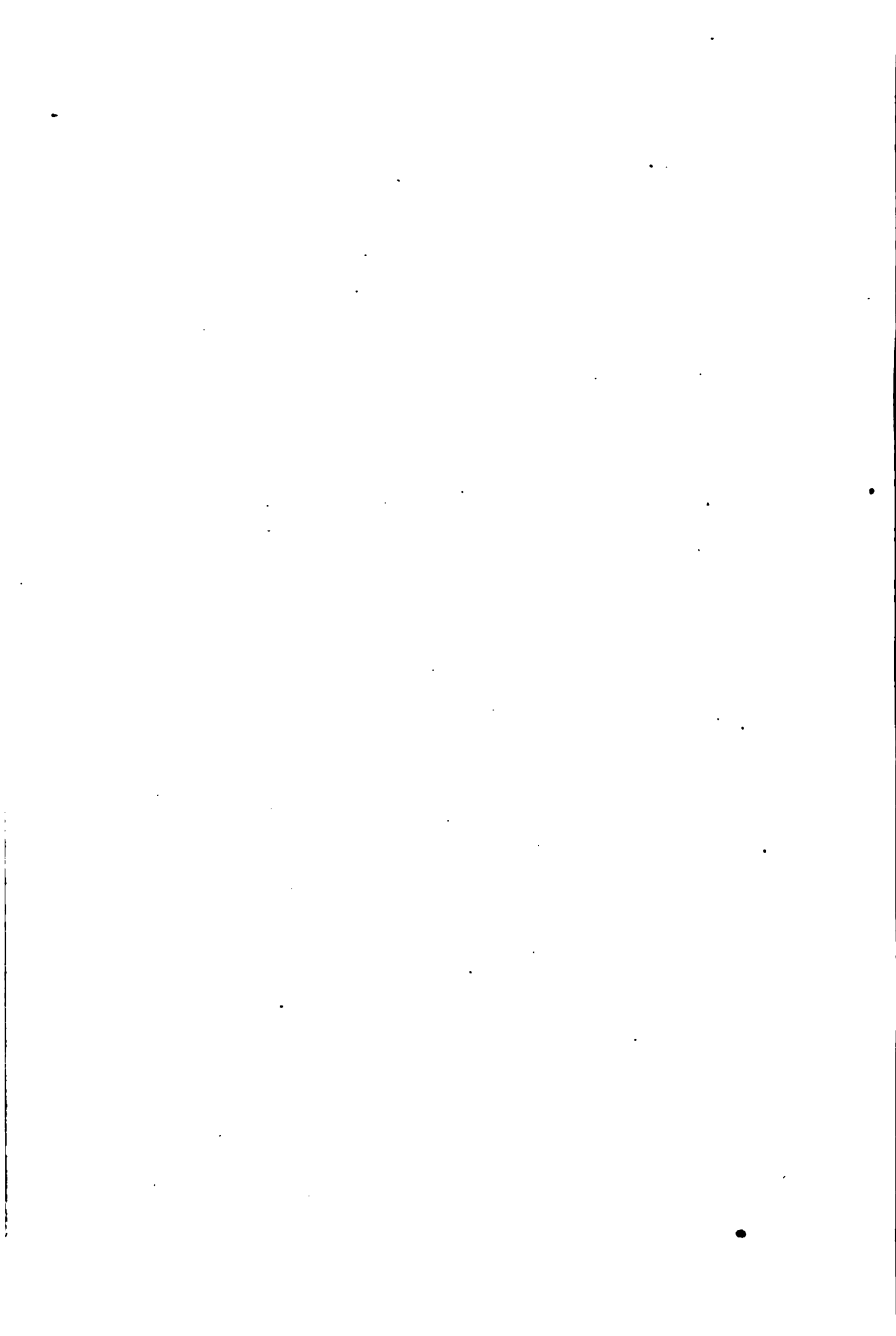
Mrs. ROSA F. GOVERT

AND

Master HARRY CLINTON WOOD,

THIS BOOK IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.



AN INTRODUCTORY EXPLANATION, OR PREFACE.

THIS is *not* a preface. The writer of this story is opposed to prefaces on general principles, and on one principle in particular, that seems to condemn the whole system.

What propriety is there in an author introducing himself as the first character in the book, and compelling his readers to give him their attention, while he spoils several pages of good paper? Nevertheless, after long and mature deliberation upon this point, and losing a great deal of sleep thinking about it, (which last is the most serious aspect of the whole question to me), I have concluded, in order to come to a good understanding with the gentle reader and put

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things upon a comfortable footing at the start, to make the following concessions to the demands of conscience and the prejudices of society, which concessions naturally group themselves under three heads:

FIRSTLY—*Dear reader*, if your conscience requires you to have a preface, and to read that preface through before attacking the story, why, then call this a preface. If, on the other hand, your conscience—like mine—leans in the other direction, call it an introductory explanation. Behold the result! All parties satisfied; everything lovely at the beginning.

SECONDLY—*Gentle reader*, if your conscience again leads you to ask, "Is this story fact or fiction?" I answer, Fiction, founded on Fact. The author has taken the usual liberty with names and dates; the incidents upon which the story is founded occurred substantially as related.

THIRDLY—*Patient reader*, does your conscience again lead you to inquire, "By what right do you call this the Centennial Story? And is there any moral aspect to the story? Answered in one (long) breath.

The foundations of this Republic were laid, one hundred years ago, in toil and tears, in prayers and blood. As pure a govern-

ment, in its inception, as the wisdom of men, guided by an honest desire for the highest good of all, could produce. Slowly at first, but steadily, surely and constantly, corruption has eaten into and permeated all classes of society, both in public and private life. In this centennial year, retribution asserts itself, justice again comes to the surface, the guilty are punished. The single word whiskey-rings tells the tale.

This, then, is a story of retribution. Therefore, *gentle reader*, if you turn pale at the ominous click of the pistol, if you start back affrighted at the glint of the naked steel, don't read this story. Or if you do, don't say I didn't give you fair warning.

True, there are some delicious love passages in the book, some sweet and tender episodes, some bits of comedy. But the moral of the story does not lie in the love passages, the tender episodes, or the comedy; but it does lie in the tragedy, and it does lie in the knife and pistol, as the necessary instruments in the work of retribution. For herein lies the moral aspect of all things. Strike the word retribution from the civil and moral law, and morality and religion are a dead letter. Strike it from physical and

mental law, and all reformation is an empty farce. .

Therefore, *dear, gentle, patient reader*, if you would have reform, you must face the music and stand fire; for life is all a tragedy, and the conflict ever rages, in church and state—in the pulpit, the bar, the forum, the mart; and the red hand of retribution ever points with unerring finger to the inevitable results of wrong-doing.

THE AUTHOR.

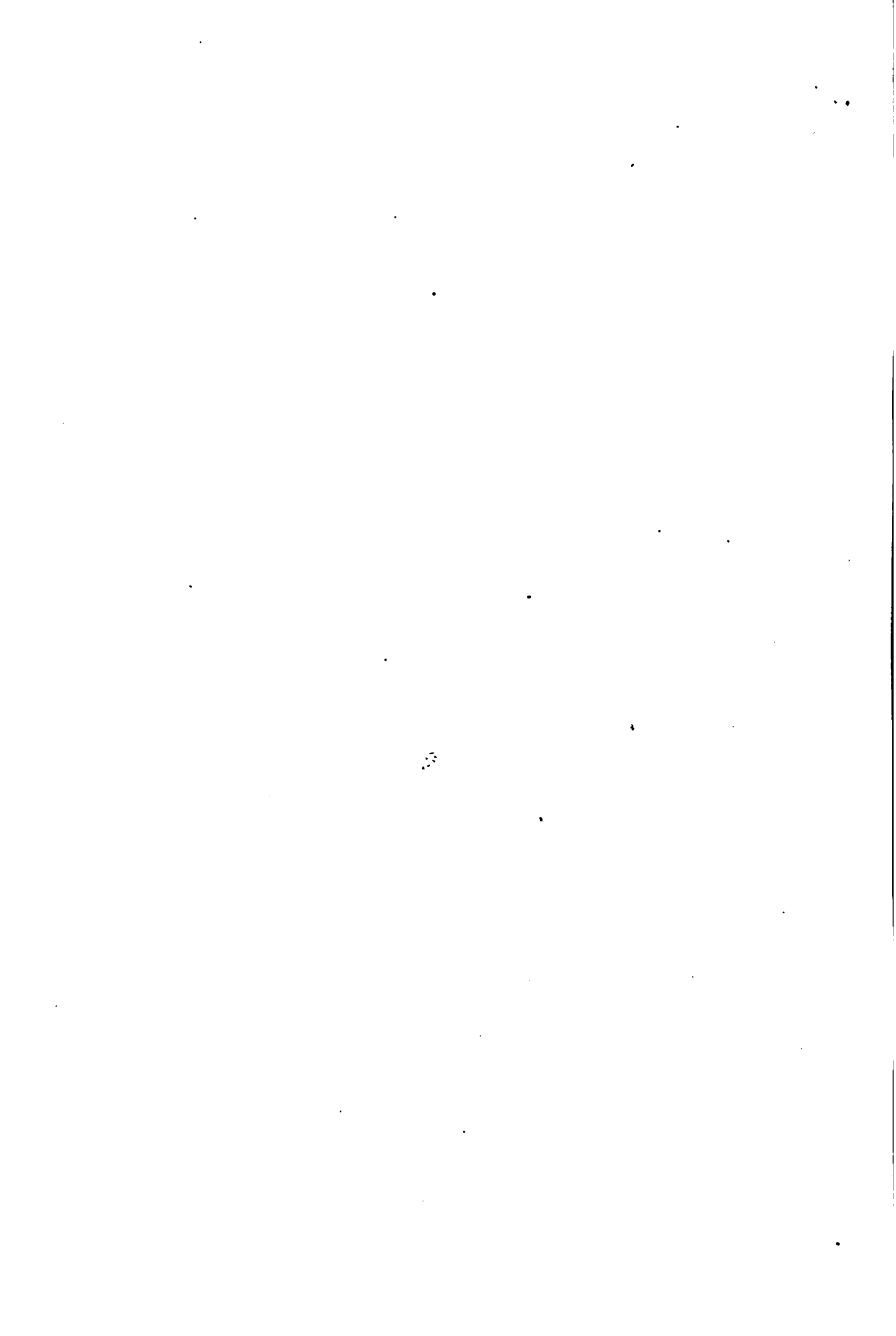
DIG.

A CENTENNIAL STORY.

The most Decided Sensation Issued from the
Press in 1876.

*"For time at last sets all things even—
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power,
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long,
Of him who treasures up a wrong."*

—Mazeppa.



DIG. TWO HEADS WANTED.

CHAPTER I.

A VERY NICE YOUNG MAN.

“ Whom do we dub as gentlemen? The knave, the fool, the brute—

If they but own full tithe of gold and wear a costly suit;
The parchment scroll of titled line, the ribband at the knee,
Can still suffice to ratify, and grant such high degree;
But Nature, with a matchless hand, sends forth her nobly born,
And laughs the paltry attributes of wealth and rank to scorn;
She moulds with care a spirit rare—half human, half divine,
And cries exulting, ‘ Who can make a gentleman like mine?’”

—*Eliza Cook.*

In the year 1847 there was in that part of London lying between White Chapel road and Bishop's Gate street, a row of houses which cannot be better described than as a compromise between faded gentility on the one hand and absolute poverty on the other, leaning to all points of the compass and

threatening to carry their inhabitants down in their fall, which seemed very near at hand.

In the most respectable and most perpendicular portion of this row stood the boarding house of Mother Sellers—who, to do her justice, was worthy of a much better portion than fell to her lot; for there was no denying that, although the house presented a most forlorn aspect on the outside, when you had once entered, a most satisfactory and comfortable change was apparent on every side; for this good lady, as some now living can testify, did keep her boarders in that comfort and good fare which many houses much more pretentious on the outside could lay no claim to. In fact, the good old lady suffered more from the outward appearance of things than any of her friends did—being the widow of Admiral Sellers, and able to show good blood, both on her own as well as on her husband's side, and not at all acquiescing in the hard fortune that compelled her, on the death of her husband, to endeavor to make both ends meet by taking care of that mixed lot of humanity that are to be found in a second-rate boarding house, no matter how respectable it may be.

In this house then, up two flights of stairs in a back room—and so, good reader, you see at once, the room as well as the house was second rate—in this room on the twelfth of April, 1847, sat a young man just verging into manhood. Any one looking upon this young man for the first time, would come to the conclusion immediately, that whatever might be the quality of the surroundings, he at least was not second rate.

Not only that indescribable air of manliness and physical beauty, (for that belongs to some men as well as women), but also that inborn regal air of good breeding, indicating good blood, as well as good looks in some of his ancestors; perhaps far back, perhaps near by in his mother, for this man left the impression upon you, which you found growing deeper upon acquaintance, that, with an almost womanly beauty, there was an iron physical frame, and that under a winning smile and a playful manner, that irresistibly attracted you, there lay smouldering fires that, like the hot lava from the crater, might, if aroused and let loose, carry everything before them

It might be supposed from the mass of papers, apparently legal documents, with

which the only table in the room was covered, that this was the sanctum of some poor attorney striving to wade through the mysteries of a case, fortunately fallen into his grasp; but a skeleton standing in the corner, and sundry bottles and specimens preserved in spirits, occupying a glass cupboard, indicated that this was the office of a poor Esculapious, and not a disciple of Blackstone.

In fact, this man was a surgeon rather than a medical practioner, all his tastes and inclinations leading in the direction of surgery; but at this time he was uniting both professions, and endeavoring to make his way out of a labyrinth of debt into which he had become involved by living faster than his means would allow. As a consequence of the difficulties in which he had become involved with certain exacting tradesmen, who had grown tired of waiting for their bills to be paid, the young man had been compelled to give up a very good hospital practice, and instead of any longer following his own inclinations, follow the only road that can lead to recovery from the disease of impecuniosity—that is, economy and self denial.

From a bed standing in one corner, it was evident that the cure was in progress; that

this was the only room that the limited means of the doctor would allow. The largest paper, and the one that had last received attention, was evidently an important document, for it had been heavily sealed, and bore on the outside, in large, plain letters, this inscription: "THE LAST WISHES AND INSTRUCTIONS OF WALTER OLDCROFT, TO HIS SON, RICHARD OLDCROFT." Taken up and read—which, being necessary to the full understanding of this story, we will now take the liberty to do—it ran thus:

"My Dear Son:—Feeling that soon the affairs of this earth will forever have passed away from me, I am urged by my own impressions, and by my sense of duty to you, to give an account, necessarily brief, of my life. A delicacy of feeling, natural timidity, and other considerations that you will understand upon reading this paper, have prevented my telling you these things before; but now, with the Judgment and the bar of God before me, my natural timidity, or, more properly, my shrinking from giving pain to any living thing, is all overcome, and lost in the pressing desire that, if possible, anything I can do or say in my last moments, may result in simple justice being done to you, my

child, (for I feel that perhaps I might have done more, but circumstances, that are often stronger than any human power, have seemed to baffle me; if I have erred, forgive me.)

“As you know, my father was Harry Oldcroft; a better or more indulgent father never lived. There were but two children of us, myself and the fiend in human shape that I was compelled to call brother. Ralph Oldcroft was a born tyrant. He was adapted, by his whole physical and mental nature, for this: overbearing, exacting, headstrong, and brutal to the whole family, which it was well was not a large one. I will do him the justice, however, to say that never, in a long life, spent in various parts of the world, have I met another who was his equal, in every respect, as to natural advantages, if only these gifts had been turned in the right direction. .

“With an iron, physical frame that bid defiance to dissipation of all kinds, with an art of pleasing, of saying nice things in a nice manner whenever he was in a good humor, or had some object to accomplish by these tactics; and on the other hand, the malignity of the arch-fiend himself, when he was in a

villainous humor, or when he could not accomplish his desires by what he styled the soft-soaping operation, so that he generally accomplished his purpose, no matter what, and kept the whole of us in subjection.

“Even before my father’s indisposition compelled him to give up all charge of his affairs, not a stick of timber could be cut, nor a pheasant shot; not a dog bark on the estate, but this seemingly omnipresent spirit of evil was upon it in an instant. It was a peculiarity of his, that although his dissipation was so flagrant as to be known through all the country around, yet, unlike most persons of that temperament, he was sharp, long-headed, always on hand regulating the expenditures of the whole household, every individual member, and finally those of father himself.

“Our family was composed, besides those already mentioned, of Janet Summers, our faithful old housekeeper; Bob Keller, overseer of outdoor matters, and various other servants not necessary to mention; but it is important you should know that faithful old Janet lives yet, and that Bob Keller occupies the same position with his old master, your uncle, at the place where he now lives, the

same where these circumstances I relate occurred.

“Bob Keller I knew to be of as perverse a disposition as Ralph; and good old Janet I knew to be the one that could be depended upon, and I always went to her after mother’s death, at first to receive some comfort from her motherly nature, afterwards as the ally on my side against the encroachments of the tyrant; but I hardly dared to breathe a whisper within the four walls of any room in the house, for fear it would reach the ears of our task-master; and be followed, if not by blows, at least by such a torrent of curses as would make the hair stand on our heads for twenty-four hours thereafter.

“I know, if my dear old father had not been entirely overmastered and controlled, he would have finally left his immense estate so that his oldest son could not have exerted his power over us after his death; I know this most positively, from a circumstance that occurred immediately after the accident, which, as you are aware, hastened his death.

“My dear old father and I were always on the best of terms, and, while I could see he shrank with loathing from the beastly

brute that ruled us both, he seemed to confide in me, and to hold me as, in some sense, the connecting-link between himself and the beloved mother who had gone to the place of final rest. Of course this manifestation on his part was utterly impossible when my brother was around, and our conferences were held in the utmost secrecy."

CHAPTER II.

A VERY BAD YOUNG MAN.

"As the husband is, the wife is; thou art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will have weight to drag thee down;
He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse."

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

"A few days before my father reached the seventy-first year of his age, in taking his usual horseback ride, as he neared the house on his return, his horse frightened at the sudden jumping of a dog through a hedge, sprang aside so suddenly that he was thrown from his saddle without being able to withdraw his feet from the stirrups. I was the only one near enough to attempt to stop the frightened animal as he came over the lawn at full speed with that helpless body hanging at his side; but my muscles were like iron, under the excitement of the moment, and I succeeded, after receiving some severe bruises, in stopping the horse, and, with the assistance

of others, in carrying the insensible man into the house.

"I supposed then that this, my almost only friend, was killed; but upon the arrival of medical aid, it was ascertained that he had received no injuries immediately fatal, but that undoubtedly, from present indications, the spine had been injured—to what extent time only would show. From that time my poor father's days of moving about were almost numbered.

"One day, during my brother's absence, he sent for me to come to his room, and calling me very close to him—after having looked about the room as if he was afraid the walls hid some one waiting to catch his words—he said:

"Walter, my son, you saved my life. Come close, and never breathe a word to any living soul of what I tell you; I have made my will, and it is in a safe place. You are to have one-half of the estate and Ralph the other half; when I am gone, take care of the old place as well as you can. I shall leave you enough money so that you may leave here, if that should seem to be the best course.'

"It was two weeks after this occurrence that Ralph said to me: "I want you to get

yourself ready and go down to Devonshire to attend to that business. This was a great surprise to me—for, in general, he never entrusted me with any business—and I feared some mischief was lurking under this proposal, so I made several excuses, when, as usual, he flew into a violent passion, and, as usual, I gave up and went, first telling Janet my suspicions, and also telling her if it were possible to escape the argus-eyed vigilance of her keeper, to write to me of any unusual occurrence.

“On the morning of the third day, having completed the business sooner than I expected, and hurrying home as fast as steam could carry me, I received a dispatch from Janet, which I remember as if it were yesterday: ‘Hurry home; your father is dying.’ When I arrived at home my father was dead, and I found that during my absence two very important things had taken place, which will appear in time.

“Here was my dear father, dead, indeed, while the one for whom he expressed the most affection was purposely sent out of the way, and already a dark suspicion of treachery had taken possession of my mind.

“Immediately following the funeral, and

at my brother's request—for he seemed to be, contrary to his usual temperament, in a nervous haste—the will was produced and read. Did the will say what the now dead man had said to me only a few days before? Yes, the body of the will did, showing that what my father had told me at the private interview was really his intention. It left one-half of the estate to me and one-half to my brother Ralph; that is, when detached from its legal technicalities, which I will not repeat, that was it as plain as the English language, at least *legal* English language, could make it.

“But that was not all. In a condicil made during my absence, all that portion of the will which left me one-half of the estate was revoked, and the whole left, unconditionally, to Ralph Oldcroft, the oldest son.

“That is the simple statement of the case, as it presented itself to me on that memorable morning, when I realized I had been cut off from all the hopes I had been led to indulge; and, as I thought, treated like a dog by one I had trusted and confided in.

“How did the case present itself to me in the light thrown upon it by after events, and by a stolen interview with Janet Sum-

mers ? The simple truth told to me by the old woman, whom I always trusted implicitly, was this :

“ After I left on my journey to Devonshire, my father immediately grew worse; as my brother’s will was law in that house, she was not even allowed to send for a physician, my brother saying: ‘ There had been too much doctoring already,’ and even driving the faithful old woman from the room when she tried to act the part of nurse.

“ At one corner of my father’s room was a closet, at that time not used for any purpose. The closet in times past had been a double one, and opened right against another closet in the opposite room. When the door was cut I do not know; but one had been cut for the purpose of using the whole space on that side of the wall of the opposite room, as a general receptacle of cast-off clothing.

“ Here, then, the faithful Janet took her station the night before my father’s death. Did her vigilance result in anything ? It resulted in the most astounding revelation, as far as I and my children are concerned, that the most fertile imagination could conceive of.

“ She saw Ralph Oldcroft at the dead of

night propping up this old man, whose spirit had almost fled to the other world, whose life must have been just flickering in the socket before going out forever; she saw this fiend prop him up in bed, administer stimulants, and with the help of his good friend, Bob Keller, guide his failing fingers to put pen to paper. What paper? Is there any need to ask? This codicil was witnessed by Bob Keller and Mary Burkitt, one of the chamber-maids; who, upon being questioned by Janet, said she had been called into master's room early in the morning to witness this document. A little more persistence exerted in tracing up this part of the story, developed the fact that Mr. Keller had given the girl an entire new suit of clothes, and Ralph Oldcroft had given her one hundred pounds in money, for which fortune there is no doubt she would have been willing to sell herself, body and soul, to any one.

"This, then, was one very important thing that had happened during my absence. But I said there was another.

"There was, some months before this, a beautiful girl living as chamber-maid at the house of Lonsdale, whose estate joined the Oldcroft estate on the north. The name of

this girl was Mary Morgan—at least that was the name she went by. She always made upon me the impression that she had before this lived in good society. I always liked her nice, winning ways; my brother always took a great deal of notice of her, so much so that it could not be passed over in silence; and I was certain mischief must be brewing—as it was with everything he had anything to do with—but was not prepared for what followed, and was very much surprised when he took this girl, against the wishes of the Lonsdale family, into our house as chamber-maid; for I knew he was not accustomed to go to any unnecessary expense, and we certainly needed no more servants at that time.

“To make this portion of my story as short as possible, it appeared he had gained the affections of this confiding girl under the promise of marriage; and matters had proceeded so far that scandal and disgrace before the whole community on the one hand, or to get rid of his burden on the other, were the only alternatives. He chose shame before his own family in preference to shame before the whole community, and brought this confiding, trusting girl to his own house,

not as his lawful wife, but as his mistress ; and there, not long afterwards, a child was born. This was bad enough so far, but worse was to come.

“As mother and child were doing well when I left home, I, in this instance, gave my brother credit for at least having a little humanity and feeling, and supposed that his intention was to provide a home and the necessaries of life for his victims.

“Upon my return mother and child were gone. My brother said Mary had concluded to accept his offer and go to a town not far distant, where he was to supply her with a liberal allowance, payable at stated times. I believed the story at the time, but after being enlightened with regard to the matter of the will, I could not believe it any longer.

“What were the facts, as after investigations, backed by the statements of Janet Summers, developed ?

On the morning of the day of my return both mother and child were found dead in bed. This was a fact that might be concealed from most of the household, but could not be hidden from Janet, as she was nurse for everybody in the house.

Assisted by Bob Keller my brother pro-

cured an old packing case to bury the bodies, but finding it too small—and being in a great hurry to get the bodies out of the way before my return—these two fiends used their knives freely in packing their victims into the narrow coffin, and hurried it away to a nameless grave. So he had, indeed, sent mother and child to the best home that could be found for them, out of the reach of himself, and away from all the trials of life.

CHAPTER III.

A CLIMAX AND A SOLILOQUY.

"Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us from the living truth!
Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the straiten'd forehead of the fool!"

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

"You will naturally ask, why I did not take steps to bring this monster of crime to justice? Take a sober second thought. What could an old woman and a comparatively helpless man do against the wisdom of Solomon, united to the malevolence of the arch-fiend himself? What could we do against two desperate men, not to say anything about the fact that at least four more of the servants were in league with the master in carrying out his wicked purposes? I only obtained information from Janet by writing notes, which were immediately destroyed.

"I had, indeed, serious thoughts of trying

to force justice from the tyrant, but was afraid even to consult any one. Soon after this, matters were brought to a crisis in a way I could not have foreseen.

“On going one morning to the stables for my usual ride I found my horse was gone, and, not stopping to ascertain the reason of this unusual occurrence, I took a favorite horse of my brother’s, and having rode for about an hour, (not as long as I was accustomed to), I returned the horse to the stable, as far as I know, in as good plight as when I had taken him out. I am certain of having used the horse with more care than I should have exercised had I been riding my own. The next day this favorite horse was very lame. I can only account for this fact on one supposition, and that I believe is the correct one: Bob Keller had lamed the animal for the purpose of getting me into trouble.

“Be this as it may, when my brother ascertained the facts in the case, I received more than the usual amount of cursing, until, not being able any longer to contain myself, I told the scoundrel what I knew of his villainies; that he had cheated me out of my lawful rights, and called him plainly a MURDERER and THIEF.

“The effect my words had upon him was more of a surprise to me than I ever remember to have received from any other circumstance of my life. Had he gone wild with fury and struck me to the earth, it would have been just what I expected.

“He did no such thing. To be sure, he turned of a livid paleness at first, but, instantly recovering himself, he said: ‘You have been shabbily treated, that is a fact, and I owe you some return for the trifling manner in which you have been treated with regard to the matter of the will and the estate. I must and will do something for you, and you may depend upon it; but you are too hasty in taking offence at me. I assure you I did not have the making of the will, or any voice in it; and you should not blame me for what was not my fault.’ And so he went on for sometime, endeavoring to leave a favorable impression upon my mind.

“I was struck dumb with surprise. What did this mean? There was but one reasonable supposition: he scented danger ahead, and wanted to conciliate me. Was it not possible I might yet get the upper hand of him? For the rest of that day I indulged my imagination in all manner of wild plans

but may lead you to justice—simple justice, I now say: do not force any quarrel; be patient—*wait* and *hope*; but if ever the time comes, in the good providences of God, when a way opens to do justice—simple justice—*do it* with all your might. God is a God of justice, and every one who works for justice is doing God's work.

“There are but two lives between you and the Oldcroft estate; these are the lives of Richard Oldcroft, and his only son Ralph, the younger. This son, as I know, inherits all the vices of his father, without his caution and foresight; is dissipated, and cannot last long in his present manner of living.

“There is one daughter, as far as I have been able to ascertain, of an unusually sweet, loving, good disposition, probably inherited from her mother, who was from one of the best families of England.

“I have thus, as far as possible, put you in possession of these facts, important for you to know. I leave this communication in the hands of our most trusty friend, Theophilus Parker, to be given to you on your twenty-first birth day; and also leave with him, to be given to you when circumstances make it necessary, absolute proof that you

are the child of Walter Oldcroft, born in lawful wedlock, and rightful heir to this immense estate.

“My dear boy, always remember that honesty, integrity, persistence and perseverance will win in any honorable calling. I leave you an unsullied name, and hope to meet you in a better world.”

Having read the communication through the second time, to fix what he considered the most important part of it in his mind, the young man stretched himself back in the chair with the air of one accustomed to take things easy. He seemed to be for a long time buried in thought, for the usual careless look departed from his face, and something nearly a frown took its place.

At length he seemingly arrived at a satisfactory arrangement of the matter in his mind, for he spoke aloud, (as persons much alone are apt to do, talking to themselves for want of better company): “My dear old father! how well I remember him. Yes, his only fault was that he cared too much for other people’s welfare, and not enough for his own. I do not take after him in that respect; nor, indeed, I think in many others. I am not of a forgiving disposition, or dis-

posed to give up any of my rights. Will I follow his advice, and wait? Good advice, but hard to follow in my circumstances. Here am I, the lawful heir to an immense estate; and, while others, stained with every crime that can be named, are living at the top of the pot, I am here rotting in this filthy hole.

“The little estate that my father left me, what has become of that? Gone, gone to the same place where three thousand pounds more have gone—into the coffers of this greasy, grasping old Jew, Lazarus Operman. In plain English, I owe the aforesaid highly distinguished member of the underground board of trade three thousand pounds more than I have any immediate or remote prospect of paying. Now, what is the practical common sense view for me, Richard Oldcroft, to take of these circumstances unfolded before me? I think I am a pretty good hand at taking this kind of a view of matters; and it is a great pity I had not brought my mighty intellect to bear upon the legal profession; then I could have settled this whole matter satisfactorily. But, instead of being a lawyer, I must go and be a surgeon, and cut up people’s bodies instead

of looking after their estates. But one thing nobody will dispute—I can cut up a body as neatly as any man in England, and enjoy it, too, which some others can't. Every one to his trade, say I.

“But, as aforesaid, what is the practical solution at which I have arrived, in view of the foregoing premises? Simply this: to do what my dear father was advised to do so long ago—drop my present name, drop out of the edifying and delightful society of London, and appear in some other locality.

“The change of name and change of air will do me good, and will accomplish two very important results at the same time. First, I will escape from this nasty, persistent Jew; and, secondly, I may find some of this immense fortune, before I become so old as to have no need of it.

“Let me see, I will look over my list of parties having practices to sell out, good will and all, at such ruinously low figures. How can they do it, anyhow? Here's the very thing I'm looking for: 'Doctor Temple, being about to leave the village of West Cove, near Wiltshire, offers the good will of a large and increasing practice, on terms that cannot fail to please any one who means business.'

“Well, I’m the man you’re looking for. I mean business right at this spot, West Cove; for there I shall be near to my highly esteemed relative, Ralph Oldcroft, and his dear son; and last, but not least, his sweet, loving, good dispositioned daughter. Yes, I’ll do it without delay; drop out of the edifying society of London, and appear in the society of West Cove, as Doctor Alfred Mortimer. Mortimer is a good name—it was my dear mother’s maiden name.

CHAPTER IV.

A PORTION OF THE STAGE, AND SOME OF THE ACTORS.

"He was a boy when first we met,
His eyes were mixed of dew and fire,
And on his candid brow was set
The sweetness of a chaste desire;
But in his veins the pulses beat
Of passion waiting for its wing,
As ardent veins of summer heat
Throb through the innocence of spring."

—*Bayard Taylor.*

A few hours' ride by rail from London, among a succession of low hills, and near the head of a beautiful cove or bay, running far inland, is the village of West Cove. Surrounded by natural beauties of various kinds, no more enticing spot could be found for fishing or hunting parties; no more enjoyable place to seek a rest from the heat and turmoil of the great metropolis. Within a mile of the village were the borders of the Oldcroft estate, the beautiful cove being included within its bounds.

From the balcony of the Hall, or Sea View, as the residence of Ralph Oldcroft was called, the visitor beheld, spread out before him, the finest panorama of land and sea to be found anywhere upon that coast.

The society of the village and surrounding country was of the best; as not only the Oldcroft family, but many other old and distinguished families, had taken up their residences, near here, the coast presenting to the eye a succession of noble estates extending for many miles.

To this point the young man mentioned in the first chapter came, in April, 1847, for the purpose of looking around, and perhaps buying the practice of the resident physician, who had advertised in the *Times*.

Upon seeing the beauties of the place, and also influenced by other private considerations, the young man, Richard Oldcroft (but who we will hereafter know only as Doctor Alfred Mortimer) purchased all the rights and good will of the out-going man, and being ready now to commence dealing out calomel and jalap in any quantity to his victims, he returned to London to make his final arrangements for dropping out of the society of that Babel, and appearing in a new

name, and making a new start, in a place where he had the great advantage of being a new man, and so, like a new broom, could sweep clean at first.

Before proceeding with the doctor to his his new residence, we must introduce some characters that are to play an essential part in this history.

Some years before this story commences, Richard Oldcroft had employed as office boy, Nicholas Squelch, not only because he was quick and smart, could get through a great deal of work in a very short time, but also with a desire to help his mother, who was a hard-working woman, always driven to the full extent of her abilities to support herself and three children, Nicholas and two sisters.

The doctor had employed her to do his washing, mending, and any other work that she could do; more from a desire to help a really needy woman, than from any necessity to have the work done. The boy had met with a severe accident soon after coming into the doctor's employment; he was run over at a crossing, and would have been carried to the hospital had not the doctor, hearing of the accident, had him carried to his office;

and, after setting a broken arm, carried him home, where he attended him constantly and faithfully. By this means, although this poor family were not able to pay the doctor for his kindness, he gained a friend and ally in this young man. Indeed, although he could not realize it at the time, he had gained in the friendship of this poor and obscure individual, whom he had helped from the sole impulse of pity, a force on his side, and in his favor, that he could not have gained in the person of any other single individual in the city of London.

Nicholas Squelch, when a boy, would probably have been called by a great many people a very bad boy; one that might possibly end by pulling hemp; but with all his love for mischief, there was nothing vicious, there was no desire to injure any one. It was simply a love of mischief, because it was natural, and the simple working out of a mischief-loving nature; and with this love for mischief, fun and frolic, was conjoined the most marvellous capacity for mimicking anything living, be it man, bird or beast; and, also, the most astonishing celerity in taking himself out of the way after the mischief was done; the most extraordinary

quickness of movement, not equaled by Signor Blitz himself.

The pedestrian, pursuing his way along the streets of London, would suddenly be startled by the most unearthly yelp of a dog directly under his feet; and while giving a tremendous bound to escape from the dog, a loop of twine, thrown with unerring aim, would whisk his hat from his head through a second-story window. The night-watch, pursuing his solitary beat, would be suddenly attracted by the sounds of dreadful conflict, and cries of murder, proceeding from an alley; and, upon rushing promptly to the rescue, would be met with a deluge of the dirtiest and most odorous water.

The tired occupant of some lonely attic, disposed to rest at night from the fatigues of the day, but harrassed to distraction by the wails of a tom-cat under his window, would at length arise and open the window for the purpose of shooting the disturber of his rest, when suddenly the body of a defunct cat would be hurled through the window, and the solitary occupant left to meditate upon the uncertainty of earthly rest, and wonder how a dead cat could make so much noise.

These were boyish tricks, to be sure, but

they differed from other boys' tricks in the one essential particular, that they were done with such marvellous dexterity and swiftness that it was impossible to catch sight of the party who performed them.

Not only was the genius of this extraordinary individual conspicuous in this manner, but also in transforming himself, at the shortest kind of notice, into anybody, (that is, any human body,) and taking up the character of the person; becoming, as it were, transformed into that person, identifying in himself all his peculiarities of whatever kind. In whatever direction Nicholas turned his attention, and took the trouble to give a very little application of his powers, he manifested a genius and capacity for doing anything—be it respectable or disrespectable, grave or gay, useful or useless. What took others many hours of toil to accomplish, he seemed to accomplish without any effort, and without going through the course of preparation that is usually necessary.

Having outgrown his boyish pranks, he had turned his faculties now into what (for want of a better name) may be called manly pranks. He had become a very nice young man when he chose to appear as such; had

acquired a very fair knowledge of medical practice, and, when he chose to be so, was a very respectable member of society. But his transformations were so sudden it was difficult for any one, even those who knew him best, to keep track of him.

On certain days a young man might be seen reeling with intoxication through the streets; within an hour from that time the same young man, transformed into a respectable member of society, would show some lady into the doctor's office in the most orderly and quiet manner. Another hour would pass, the same individual might be found doing a little private detective business on his own account, that is, pulling handkerchiefs or other articles from the pockets of unsuspecting citizens. Before the parties could have time to discover the theft, presto, the individual had become an exquisite young man, done up in the latest fashion, with the most elegant manners, the most extraordinary powers of pleasing, and altogether, a persuasiveness and gentility that would excite the envy of any leader of the bon-ton.

On a short street, running into the Hall, and not far from St. James Square, was the place of business of the Jew, Lazarus Oper-

man, mentioned as the individual to whom the young man, Richard Oldcroft, owed the sum of three thousand pounds. The building was a long, old affair, running far back from the street; rather retired from the hum of business, and, therefore, better adapted to some kinds of business that were carried on there; for the business was properly of two kinds, at least, so the proprietor had fixed the idea in his head, and arranged the building accordingly.

The respectable portion of the business, done in the front part of the building and open to public inspection, was loaning money at one hundred and fifty per cent. interest, and buying up all the old paper, that nobody else would touch, at two and one-half cents on the dollar. The disrespectable portion of the business, done in the back part of the establishment, away from the prying eyes of the police, was loaning money on any article in pawn, from a mouse-trap to a full set of jewels; and making commercial paper, such as promissory notes, drafts and bills of exchange complete, even to the signature.

With regard to the proprietor of this concern, Lazarus Operman, it is only necessary to say that he was a Jew money-lender of

the smallest pattern and the lowest type; that is, considered with reference to his physical, intellectual, and moral attainments, a *nasty, grasping, sordid, avaricious, penurious, miserly, filching, old skin-flint*, and that is as much description as he deserves. But his clerk, Israel Mundy, cannot be disposed of in this summary manner, for he was a great genius, the life and soul of the establishment, the active man of business. The firm ought to have been Mundy and Operman. The only reason why it was not, was, the capital was in Lazarus Operman's hands, the talent was in Israel Mundy's.

Israel Mundy was a man of brains and wit, of piety and patriotism, of benevolence and stinginess, as the case might be, or the exigencies of trade called forth his various capacities. He would go to church on Sunday, pull a long face, sing psalms, give a goodly sum to the cause of benevolence and righteousness, then go to a gambling hell on the evening of the same day and win his money back betting on the white and red.

He was a man of many extraordinary accomplishments, two of which are worthy of notice. One was his faculty of buying up all the old paper that everybody else had

given over as worthless and only fit to be consigned to the waste basket.

Israel Mundy would buy anything that had a name to it, only wanting to be assured of one thing: that it was the name of some living man in London, or within easy reach of it; and then woe to the unhappy wretch whose name was signed to that paper; a relentless pursuit commenced, to be terminated in one of two ways: payment or death. He would dog that man into his grave, and as much farther as possible. In one instance he became the owner of a note for one hundred and twenty-five pounds, signed by a poor clerk in a clothing store. He dogged that man into his grave; he gave up, and died, leaving a balance of a few pounds.

Israel Mundy had the body disinterred and sold to the doctors; seized upon all the articles the man left: two chairs, a stool, a table, an ink-stand, three pens, a glass bottle, a broken candle-stick, a cat and a small dog. He killed the cat, and, taking off the skin and head, hired a boy to take it to a meat shop and dispose of it; he took the dog home and tied him up; the first night the dog howled so as to keep him awake all night; the next day the boy took the dog and tried to sell

him, but there was no sale, so the boy brought the dog back towards night. Israel Mundy tied him up again, and again the howling commenced; he got up, shot the dog, and the next day the dog followed the cat. Isreal Mundy sat down and reckoned up the net results of the transaction, including interest, and found he had lost £2 5s 3d. After being satisfied his calculation was correct, he struck his hand upon the table and swore a solemn oath he would never forgive that man, *never*.

The other accomplishment was the faculty of signing other people's names to promissory notes, and other evidences of indebtedness, in such an original and life-like manner as to puzzle the makers of the instruments themselves; but this accomplishment proved his ruin finally, as will appear in the sequel.

CHAPTER V.

A RAILROAD ACCIDENT.

"Harness me down with your iron bands,
Be sure of your curb and rein ;
For I scorn the strength of your puny hands,
As the tempest scorns a chain."

—*The Song of Steam.*

On the evening of May 5th, 1847, a railway train was approaching the village of West Cove. This is not stated as a natural curiosity, or anything of unusual occurrence, but simply to bring to the notice of the reader two persons that were passengers on that train. One of these was the young man introduced in the opening chapter, known now as Doctor Mortimer, who had been down to West Cove and spent time enough there to accomplish the results of securing the berth of the out-going doctor, and exciting a great deal of gossip in that usually quiet place, as he was a very good looking, pleasant spoken young man.

Nearly opposite the doctor, so near he had a very fair view of her features, sat a young girl, or young lady, as you please—suit yourself—attired in a very becoming traveling costume; while, of course, her face, being nearly covered up, prevented any one from seeing the beauties that otherwise might appear.

She was truly a beautiful girl; (do not be alarmed, gentle reader, we are not going into the usual spasms, raving about fair complexion, golden hair, raven tresses and pearly teeth; indeed, we very much fear all the hair, teeth and complexion have been used up in this way;) suffice it to say, then, our young lady had all of these, and more, but her chief attraction was the lovely smile that lit up her face. Her's was not one of those countenances presented by many young ladies, giving the beholder this impression inevitably: "Now, sir, I have not been introduced to you; don't you look at me; I don't know you, and what's more, I don't want to." On the contrary, this young girl's face seemed to say to every decent, respectable stranger: "I don't know you, but I would like to."

There was an indefinite, yet positive at-

traction in the gaze of those beautiful eyes; and the eyes seemed to have a peculiar fascination for the young man, who, often as he could without being intrusive, stole covert glances in that direction.

As the train approached the village of Seyton, (which is the last station before reaching West Cove,) while going at the usual speed, which here is about forty miles an hour, there was a terrible jolt, which threw the passengers promiscuously in every direction, then *thump, thump, thump, thump*, as if the train had left the track to try its luck on the ground; then another fearful lurch, a plunge, a crashing of splinters, a Babel of sounds, and, in a much shorter time than it takes to narrate it, the train had plunged down an embankment of twenty feet in height, and lay a mass of broken wood, iron, glass and human beings, mingled in awful confusion, from which an occasional tongue of flame leaped up, where the fire had begun its deadly work.

Our friend, the doctor, was hurled to the other side of the car, and, for an instant, he did not realize what had happened or where he was. Upon recovering himself, his first impulse was to look in the same direction he

had been looking all the evening, to see what had become of the young lady.

The sight that met his gaze was enough to make any man tremble, even though he had been a surgeon in Her Majesty's service. A portly passenger lay half forced through a window, head out and heels working industriously inside; near him a man apparently lifeless; the seats had been jammed and broken, and the car wrenched near the middle, so that in the spot where the young lady lately sat seemed to be only a pile of rubbish, where it was hard to distinguish anything. But as the light grew brighter with the increasing fire, the doctor went to work with a will, and by the increasing light was able to ascertain the fact that the object of his search was held fast in some way to the bottom of the car. A little further investigation and he was enabled to ascertain the true state of the case: a large splinter, wrenched from a seat, had penetrated the lady's cloak, also, some of her clothing, and she was held as if in a vice.

In an instant the doctor took a small knife and went to work to cut the garments loose; but he soon saw this would not do. Judging from the appearance of the light, there was

too much fire around there to admit of any delay in changing the locality. Just as these thoughts had run through his mind, a soft voice—a most angelic voice it seemed to him then, as it was the first time he had heard it—said: “There is a pair of scissors in my pocket.” Rejoiced to find that the beautiful passenger was not still in the stillness of death, the doctor sprang to his work with a new vigor; found the pocket and the scissors, and soon had released the lady from her perilous position; then carrying his fair burden in his arms, with infinite difficulty and great exertion of strength, succeeded in fighting his way to the door of the car.

There a new difficulty presented itself. The door was only open a little way, and a man covered with blood, having succumbed to his fate, was fast in the door. Laying his burden down for an instant, the doctor procured a piece of wood for a crow-bar, and returning to the charge, soon had the door forced open; then he carried his fair charge into the open air. A steep embankment rose before him, but he sprung at it as a hunter takes a hedge, and about half way up he had the satisfaction of feeling the welcome grasp of a hand stretched out to assist him.

Having reached the railroad track, he laid his fair burden down and asked her if she was much hurt. Again the sweet voice fell like music on his ear, but she could not give any satisfactory answer to the question; did not know how much. As soon as possible the doctor moved his patient to the nearest house. His experience in such matters soon told him the extent of the injuries. There were some severe bruises, one ankle was dislocated, and one arm, though not seriously injured, at present useless.

The doctor soon dressed the wounds, in the most tender manner, and made his patient as comfortable as possible. The soft voice was heard again, and asked him to whom she was indebted for so much kindness. He informed her he was the new doctor at West Cove; and, in reply to his inquiry, on whom had he the honor of attending at this critical time, she informed him her name was Isabella Oldcroft, the daughter of Ralph Oldcroft.

Is it any wonder, under these circumstances, that, somewhat to the neglect of the other passengers, the doctor should devote his best efforts to the lovely maiden thus thrown upon his care? Is it any wonder that, later in the evening, when a carriage

arrived from Oldcroft Hall, upon being urgently requested by her brother to return with them, he should accept the invitation? What else could he do? Had not a kind Providence thrown this lovely maiden upon his protection? She might die if he did not go with and take care of her. So he arranged a couch upon the seats of the carriage, and assisted in the removal of his charge, giving many instructions how everything should be done, and handling his burden as carefully as a mother would her first born.

There was room inside for but one besides the patient, so the brother took his seat outside with the driver, leaving the doctor inside with the loveliest patient he ever had upon his hands.

A succession of surprises were awaiting him on this memorable evening. He had been surprised to find he had such a beautiful cousin; of course the surprise could not be reciprocated by the cousin, as she knew nothing of the relationship. He was surprised, on reaching the gates of the park, to see a large crowd of servants expressing the greatest sympathy. "Is Miss Isabella killed, now?" "Is she much hurt?" "Bless her dear soul; and how is she by this time?"

The doctor knew that the average English servant did not care anything for master and mistress, but to get as much from them and do as little for them as is consistent with keeping their place at all.

When they arrived at the Hall an old gentleman appeared at the carriage door leaning upon crutches, with extreme anxiety and alarm depicted upon his countenance.

"My dear daughter, are you much hurt? Tell me, now, that you are not much hurt."

"No, dear pa, I don't think I am badly hurt, but I don't know yet how much; I am very sore all over."

A lounge was at the door, and the young girl being laid upon this was carried through a large hall, then turning into a hall running at right angles with the main one, was conveyed to pa's room. When the lounge had been set down, although suffering very much, she said: "Pa, this is Doctor Mortimer, the new doctor. If it had not been for him I should have burned up in the cars." And then, in a brief manner, she went over the circumstances attending the accident.

At the close of the narrative, Old Ralph approached the doctor, and giving his hand a grasp he had reason to remember for some

time, bid him welcome to Oldcroft Hall, and poured out a torrent of thanks for the services he had rendered. The doctor was a little surprised. Was this the man whom he had been led to suppose was a ravenous beast, or a fiend incarnate? He had seen but one side of his uncle's character, under extreme excitement; he had yet to see the other.

Another source of surprise was the elegance of the house into which he had been ushered; as he had viewed it from the outside, the only ideas he had formed of the inside were connected with visions of old last century pictures, worn out carpets, faded hangings, and a general aspect of worn out gentility.

What was his surprise, then, to find his feet falling upon the softest velvet carpet; lounges, ottomans, sofas, invalid chairs, all of the most elegant material and modern style; articles of taste and beauty on every side, while enormous mirrors, reaching from floor to ceiling, multiplied all these objects in their crystal depths.

The room into which the patient had been brought was Old Ralph's room, and adjoining that, to be near "dear pa," was the

daughter's room. These rooms were at the back part of the house, and commanded a view of the estate in that direction, extending back until it reached the waves of the ocean.

In one of the deep bay windows was an enormous invalid's chair, in which the owner of this wealth sat most of the time, looking upon the objects that came within the limit of his vision.

CHAPTER VI.

A NICE HOUSE AND A NICE FAMILY.

"Locksley Hall that in the distance overlooks the sandy tracks—
And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring into cataracts.
Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere I went to rest,
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly to the west,
Here about the beach I wandered, nourishing a youth sublime—
With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of time;
When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed,
When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed."

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

The old part of the Hall had been a very rambling, old style, tumble-down affair, but during the life of his late wife, Old Ralph, at her request, had built a new part attached to the old, and furnished it in the most extravagant manner, the extravagance being due to his own whim, and not altogether at his wife's desire; but for the comfort and elegance, the articles of refinement and beauty, his wife as well as himself was to blame, if any one was disposed to attach any blame in that connection.

Here, then, the doctor was ushered into an abode of luxury and refinement, with everything to please the eye and gratify the taste for the beautiful, as well as every comfort, for those who cared more for comfort than show. And all this lit up by the smiles and presence of a beautiful woman. Can we wonder, after the warm invitation he had received to make his home here, he should inwardly resolve not to be unsociable or backward, but occasionally let his cheerful countenance beam upon the invalid man and the lonely girl, who was now for a time to be his patient.

Is there any need to go over the same old tale, as it is generally told in stories of this description? How the man and woman gradually come to know each other; the course of true love from its beginning—from its first inception; the doubts, the fears; the joy, the despair; the bliss of finding it reciprocated; and all this twaddle? No! The best way is to tell the plain truth, which was, that on that night when this man and woman first met, love sprang into being full grown; not your half-developed, dwarfed, sentimental nonsense; but full grown passion, which defies opposition, and laughs at difficulties.

It had been growing for years, this love in both hearts; this perfect love of man meeting the perfect love of woman, and forming the mightiest force the world ever has or ever will see. For is not this the history of all who are intended by the Creator to go through this experience? That they are continually approaching that point in their existence that these lives are approaching each other, and the union thus formed, is formed at once when the parties so meet, and is stronger than the union at the altar. That it is, indeed, the designs of Omnipotence that these two, although never having seen each other before, shall henceforth be one; and whatsoever God hath joined together, who can put asunder?

Having established the doctor safely in the bosom of the Oldcroft family, it is not only meet and proper, but necessary, that we give a more complete description of the persons comprising this family.

Ralph Oldcroft had been twice married. His first wife was Louisa Renshaw, an imperious, proud, frivolous woman, of whom all we need to say is: it is not known that she did any good for her husband or any one else. She was the mother of the young heir

to the estate, Ralph Oldcroft, the younger.

The second wife was Isabella Fortescue, of one of the best families in England; a noble, self-sacrificing, godly woman. Ralph Oldcroft's last love was his best, perhaps his only love. Be that as it may, this woman had more influence over him for good than all the other forces combined. From the time of her entrance into Oldcroft Hall, a new order of things took the place of the old godless way of living; not only was everything made more comfortable for the old man, now beginning to go down the hill of life, but a certain peace and contentment seemed to have taken the place of the atmosphere of curses and blue devils that used to hang over everything connected with the estate. In fact, Old Ralph had become nearly helpless, and kept the house most of the time. The sins of his youth had found him out, and he knew it, and this knowledge, conjoined to the influence of the woman whom he really loved better than any one else in the world, had a softening, modifying effect on his rugged and sin-scarred character; so that, although he had given up the old habits of swearing and flying into violent fits of passion, he always did those naughty things outside of the house, never in.

Shortly after his second marriage the daughter was born. If Ralph Oldcroft had loved the mother, he idolized the daughter. From the time of her birth she seemed to be his only solicitude, the source of his greatest pride and happiness. The mother lived long enough to instil her good principles and her self-sacrificing spirit into the nature of her daughter; but when Belle was eight years of age her mother died, and Ralph Oldcroft felt the sincerest sorrow of his life, at the moment when the cold earth fell over the remains of the one who had ever been a ministering angel to him; who had borne with his faults and infirmities, and ever been all that a good wife should be. Had the daughter not been left for his comfort he might have ended his existence then and there, for he was as extravagant in his moods of sorrow as of anger, but the love now transferred to his daughter became the ruling force of his life.

He was not alone in this love, for the son also, though a wicked, trifling, dissipated wretch, really loved the pure girl, who was ever the best of sisters to him. In fact, Isabella Oldcroft was the real master of Sea View. Whoever might be its nominal mas-

ter, she ruled by love. The air might be thick with curses out of doors, but indoors all was comfort, joy and peace when Belle was at home.

There was not an accident, or a case of sickness on the estate, but Belle and her beautiful black horse might be soon seen flying in that direction with succor. If the chamber-maid cut her finger, or the stable-boy wrenched his ankle, Belle would give the case her careful attention, if she was aware of the misfortune. If a tenant was in arrears, and could not raise the means to deliver himself from the tender mercies of Bob Keller, he had only to apply to Belle, and she would give him the money to pay the rent.

There was not a soul upon the estate but who would have been glad to lay down their lives, if necessary, for the young girl, with one exception, and that was Bob Keller; and he was such an icy old wretch that Mrs. Robbins, the old housekeeper, had told her friend, the cook, (confidentially, of course,) that she did not think there was heat enough in the place where Bob Keller was going to to thaw him out.

Here was a most signal instance of the power of one pure, noble woman over per-

verse, obdurate, hard-hearted fiends. If disposed to moralize over the matter, we should commence by giving it as our deliberate opinion, that although Satan got the better of Eve in the beginning, Eve has been retaliating on Satan ever since, by leading all the devils in the world around by the nose. If she only leads them in the right direction, it is all right any how.

Mrs. Robbins, the present housekeeper at Sea View, was a good old soul, whose most prominent characteristic was her everlasting supervision, extending to the minutest detail in her department. She kept the whole house in a kind of good natured stew; making incursions and excursions constantly into every room in search of cobwebs and dirt, and almost turning every one out in her dertermination that they should be kept clean if she could do it.

There was also an old butler—grown old in the family—with no particular character at all, except that of drinking a great deal of the liquors entrusted to his keeping, and not being of an inquiring or forward disposition, if let alone; did not have the good fortune, or misfortune, to stick his head into this story.

In one-of the tenant houses on the estate

lived an old woman, a very singular old woman, although never troubling any one with her singularity. There was an old man lived with her, supposed to be her husband, and her son, named Johnny. She behaved in a very singular manner; but her singularity seemed only to run in one direction, like a person crazy with one idea; in all other things she seemed to be and act rational, or like other people. Her peculiarity was, she seemed to be always looking for something. See her where you might, the impression produced upon you by this woman was that she was upon the track of something, or somebody, and upon the brink of some important disclosure. Late at night, early in the morning, and in all kinds of weather, she might be seen in different parts of the ground, generally walking fast and gazing intently or peering anxiously in every direction. None knew from whence she had come, or anything of her previous history. She was always orderly and quiet, and was known to be a good nurse, as she had been called upon to act in that capacity several times since she had come to reside on the estate. The old man, her husband, was at this time, and had been since their arrival at Sea View, the gate

keeper, having come to take this position upon the demise of the former gate keeper.

It was strange, but nevertheless true, that after Doctor Mortimer's arrival he very soon struck up an acquaintance with the old woman; in fact, to use a common expression, "they seemed to take to each other wonderfully."

Here was a new source of surprise, something to set the gossips' tongues wagging anew about this old woman. The son, Johnny, became the doctor's office boy, and the doctor seemed to take a great interest in the boy, and often carried him when taking his rides through the neighborhood. As the doctor had frequent occasions to recommend a nurse, it was a noticeable fact that he always recommended old Mrs. Brown when she was not otherwise engaged.

There is another individual that should be mentioned in this connection, and that is the "Major Domor," the *Grand Mogul*, Robert Keller, the man who kept all of the out door affairs at Sea View in ship-shape; who was, indeed, *ruler*, and had things pretty much his own way in the affairs out of doors. He was not a good man, not a *saint*, (in the ordinary acceptation of the term,) but he

was adapted to the place he held, and the place was adapted to him, and to do him justice, he looked after the interests of the estate faithfully. He lived, with his family, in the largest house upon the estate, nearly one mile from the Hall.

CHAPTER VII.

A HAPPY SUMMER.

Come to me in beautiful dreams, love, oh come to me oft,
When the light wing of sleep on my bosom lays soft,
When the sky and cloud wear their loveliest hue,
When the dew on the flower, and the star on the dew—
For the lash of the surge, the lisp of the wave,
Shall win thee, my love, to the couch of the brave:
Through sunshine and darkness still faithful and true,
Shines the beams of the love-star for me and for you.

If the doctor's wonder had been excited by some things he had seen the night of his arrival at Oldcroft Hall, that wonder was somewhat increased the next day when, after having seen that his lovely patient was doing well, he walked out to view the estate of which he felt himself to be the presumptive heir; and truly it was a goodly estate, a fair heritage.

Oldcroft Hall stood upon a rise of ground, falling both in the front and rear; the house was a very large structure, a new and old part joined together, but the architect had

exercised his skill to so good an advantage that no one would ever suspect that the building had not always existed in its present style.

After entering the porter's lodge, the visitor approached the Hall, for half a mile, by a wide avenue shaded by lofty trees. The lawn in front was covered with a beautiful turf, except in spots devoted to plats of flowers, and gravel walks wound in and out among the grand old trees. Occasionally a rustic summer house seemed to invite the stroller to rest awhile and view this scene of comfort and beauty that opened invitingly on every hand.

From the balconies at the rear of the Hall the eye roamed over as fine a view as could be found anywhere in all England. The ground, after leaving the Hall in that direction, gradually descended in gentle undulation to the sea shore; and through an opening in the trees you might at any time look out upon the ocean, as it lay in placid beauty under the beams of the sun, or its huge waves rolled restlessly in storms.

About a quarter of a mile from the house ran a thick set hedge north and south; and directly back of the house ran another hedge

east and west; thus dividing this portion of the estate into two parts; the right hand being a large deer park. On the left of the dividing hedge ran a wide gravel walk, extending from the back of the house—this way being generally used by those foot-passengers going to or coming from the village, or to the cottages of the estate, which lay in that direction, or to the sea shore.

A short distance after passing the stile leading over the hedge, you came to the little stream of Meadow Brook, its crystal waters usually flowing calmly over the pebbled bottom, but when swollen by recent rains it was a wide and deep stream.

Having crossed over a rustic bridge and kept the gravel walk for something more than a mile, you came upon one of the loveliest spots to be found upon that coast. This was a cove, or bay, running in from the sea for a long distance. The ground around this bay gradually ascended in every direction, making a charming place for cottages; and also on the side nearest the Hall, a favorite spot for picnics and fishing parties.

Here was a boat-house, in which from twenty to thirty boats were always kept, my

lady's boat included, which boat was itself a beauty, the neatest, jauntiest shell that ever rode the water; and my lady, besides her other accomplishments, was a splendid hand at rowing or sculling a boat. It was her custom to row over the cove to the cottages on the other side, instead of riding around the head of the cove, and her visits to the cottages were very frequent, as some of the tenants who occupied these cottages were old and poor; just the right subjects for her charity.

Is it any wonder that in the midst of so many attractions as here existed, and more especially the attraction of the presence of this lovely girl, that the doctor should yield to her captivating influences? That he should be a constant visitor at the place? That, when he had nursed and doctored his fair patient back to her usual health, these two should be found ever together, riding, walking, rowing, climbing the hills, fishing and visiting the cottages of the needy poor? Miss Belle, with her cheerful presence and delicacies from the Hall, and the doctor with his medicines.

Is it any wonder that, as the beautiful girl had never had a real companion before, that

now she should look with eyes of love upon this man, who was indeed a new revelation to her? That these two having loved with a true love upon the night when first they met, now, *that* love should become an all absorbing passion, strong and irresistible? Is it not rather, the natural result of natural causes?

There were three men who did not like the new state of things; and, indeed, were deadly set against this interference with plans they had previously made.

One of these men was Dudley Feldkamp, whom old Ralph Oldcroft had, long before this, decided to make his son-in-law. This man was not a bad man for a son-in-law at all, for he was one of the richest men in London, senior partner in the great India house of Feldkamp and Sosserole, and also a member of parliament. But he was no companion for this young girl, and she secretly loathed the man; he had always been aware that she despised him, and she disliked him for the simple reason that there was really nothing about him for a lovely and accomplished girl to admire. Miss Belle was a splendid musician, and this Feldkamp cared nothing for music. She took a great delight

in rowing a boat, but he dare not trust himself in one for fear of being drowned, which, indeed, was very likely to be the case. She was a daring and graceful rider, but he dare not get on a horse, and any one who had seen this man on one of his own horses, did not wish to see him there the second time, for the probability was he would scare the horse to death, if he was not scared to death himself.

The doctor and this man hated each other cordially from the time they first met at Sea View; and this state of feeling not only arose from that perversity which leads two men in pursuit of the same fair object, to always hate each other, but from another circumstance that happened sometime before this.

The doctor had seen this man, Dudley Feldkamp, under most humiliating circumstances. He had been a spectator one night at a West End gambiing house when this man Feldkamp had received a severe and well-merited drubbing. The doctor had merely stood by—as they had not even known each other's names at that time—he had stood by and seen him well drubbed; and at the end had said, loud enough for him

to hear, that he deserved it. And Dudley Feldkamp dared not resent the indignity put upon him, for he did not wish his name blazoned before the public as a frequenter of a gambling house. And now this same man had come here interfering with his plans, and taking his lady love away right under his nose, without as much as asking "by your leave."

Old Ralph did not like this state of things at all. He would not interfere with his daughter's happiness if he could avoid it, for he loved his daughter beyond all things. Still, he had it all arranged in his head, that his daughter was to marry this rich man, member of parliament, with good blood in his veins, and all that; and now this doctor must come here and upset all his well-laid plans. He would not be unkind or ungrateful to the doctor, for he remembered the circumstances under which they had met; but he wished something *would* happen to prevent, to render unnecessary any active interference on his part.

Old Ralph and Dudley Feldkamp stood both in the same position in relation to this matter: in that they were both waiting and hoping that the doctor would be blown up,

shot, drowned, or anything to take him out of the way.

But there was a third person who was determined to take active measures to remove this obstruction from his path; this was the heir of the house, Ralph, the younger. Not accustomed to any interference with any of his plans, of an irascable, overbearing disposition; (although he had at first been very thankful to the doctor for saving his sister's life, he had soon cooled off, and was now determined that the plans he had formed for his sister's alliance with this rich member of parliament should not be interfered with by this poor doctor;) so he commenced a series of unprovoked attacks and petty insults upon the object of his dislike. And this in spite of the fact that the doctor had been very kind to him, and done all that was possible for man to do to lead him to abandon his ruinous practices and habits, that were fast destroying him, body and soul.

So these two men waited and hoped that the doctor would be carried away in some manner; and the third man tried to drive him away. In spite of this, these lovers did as all lovers do: they walked and they rode; they climbed the hills and explored the val-

leys; they rowed their boats, and went on their errands of mercy together. Never before had this young girl lived, so she thought; and the doctor thought the same with regard to himself. Never had they spent such a glorious summer as this first summer in each other's society, when they stole glances of love, and wrapped the golden web about each other, that no earthly power could ever break.

A circumstance occurred in the middle of the summer that still further complicated this matter, and gave these three men still greater cause for alarm.

One day as the doctor was riding out in his carriage, with Johnny Brown accompanying him, his horse, becoming frightened at the sudden rising of some birds and the firing of a gun, started away at a rapid speed. The doctor was a good horseman, and would have succeeded in stopping his horse had not a line broke, thus leaving him at the mercy of the frightened animal, which dashed on until he overturned the carriage, utterly demolishing it, and throwing out its occupants.

The doctor was not seriously injured, but so seriously bruised he was not able to move;

and Johnny Brown was senseless, with one leg broken. A man soon appeared on the scene of the catastrophe with a wagon, the occupant of which was Robert Keller, and, taking up the two helpless persons, was proceeding in the direction of the village, when he met Miss Isabella out riding, who insisted that the doctor should be carried to the Hall. This request on her part might be right and proper, and again it might not; she did not stop to debate the matter. This man had saved *her* life, and she was going to do all she could to repay him in kind. So the doctor was conveyed to the Hall, and she became his nurse for a week, until he was able to go about again; and she insisted on his remaining a week longer before she would entrust him away from there.

So it seemed the fates were against the plans of the three scheming men who wished to marry Isabella to the member of parliament whether she would or no. And the two lovers continued to ride and to row; to make their visits of love and mercy; and go on their pleasure excursions; and wrap the golden web around each other, while the summer passed and fall was coming on. And all this time oblivious of the past, careless of the future; living only in the glorious present.

CHAPTER VIII.

A BLISSFUL AUTUMN.

"And I said 'My Cousin Amy speak, and speak the truth to me—
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my being sets to thee.'
On her pallid cheek and forehead came a color and a light,
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in the northern night.
And she turned—her bosom shaken with a sudden storm of sighs—
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark of hazel eyes,
Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, tearing they should do me wrong,'
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?' weeping, 'I have loved thee
long.'"

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

On the 17th of September another incident happened. From the fact that it was a very important incident, we are thus particular as to the date, for to these lovers it was a day remembered ever after. On the afternoon of this day Miss Isabella got out her beautiful boat to row across the cove, and thus accomplish two objects at the same time. One was to see an old lady, one of her special charges; and the other object was to get away from the Hall, for this Dudley Feldkamp was there now; and when he was there the doctor

did not often make his appearance, and that was another thing she did not like.

She got out the beautiful boat, and as the water was calm, and everything then seemed to be calm, she took but one oar, using it as a scull, as she was in the habit of doing. It was a lovely afternoon, the soft dreamy haze of Indian summer was just beginning to make its appearance and throw its mystic shadows over the landscape.

The sky and the water were of a deep blue, and nature seemed to sleep tranquilly under the rays of the unclouded sun. It was a picture which any painter might have longed to copy.

This lovely young lady, with careless grace and abandon, with just enough display of muscle to show she was none of your milk and water school misses; and enough of grace of motion and ease of manner to show she could rule in drawing rooms as well as row a boat; that she could make home lovely and attractive as well as go over the waves as brave men go.

Having accomplished her errand to the other side of the water—having delivered to the old lady some of the delicacies from a basket she carried, and read to her a chapter

from the Bible—she started upon her return home; but the return was not going to be such an easy matter as the coming over had been.

A wind had sprung up, setting dead in from the shore and out towards the open sea; and finding it hard work to scull the boat, she took the single oar, using it with both hands as a side oar to propel the boat through the water, which was already becoming rough enough for any boat with a full complement of oars. She had proceeded in this manner for more than one-half the distance of the return trip, when suddenly the oar snapped off short close, up to her hand. In an instant she was drifting out toward the open sea, in an open boat, with nothing but a short stick in her hand.

At once she realized the extent of the disaster. There was no help for her but in attracting the attention of some one on either shore, more than a mile distant, and that distance increasing every moment as the boat drifted out towards the point beyond which she had no hope, except to be picked up by some chance vessel.

She tied her handkerchief on the end of the stick, and standing up in the boat, waved

her signal and looked to either shore for help, but saw none. But there was a man riding in a carriage on the side of the cove nearest to the Hall. She could not see this man on account of the distance and the bushes which hid him from her view. But the man had caught the motion of something on the water; he stopped, raised a small field-glass to his eye for an instant, then giving his horse a cut with the whip that he did not seem to be at all used to, dashed on as fast as his vehicle would allow for the boat-house.

In the meantime, the boat with its solitary and helpless passenger was drifting steadily out to sea. She had swung the handkerchief until she was no longer able to stand in the boat, for the waves dashed over it and threatened to fill it at any moment, so she had to remain quiet and hold on hard to save herself from being thrown out. She was already past the point of the bay, and had given up all hope. The wind was settling steadily out to sea, the white caps were beginning to look angry, and the boat was gradually but surely taking water at every plunge it made over the waves.

She looked back with a hopeless, despair-

ing gaze towards the home she might see no more, and thought of her late happiness, and wondered if thus it was all to end. And while she thus looked, straining her eyes to catch the last glimpse of the receding shore, suddenly what seemed to be a white cap, larger than the rest, caught her eye.

Down it went, up again—this time nearer, larger—down again—up again—nearer, larger—down again—up again—nearer, larger. Yes; it is ! it is ! a boat to the rescue, and a boat, too, propelled by no novice, no weak arms; but shooting over the waves, urged by two as strong arms as are often found, and now strung up with excitement until it seemed as if there would be two more broken oars. On she comes,—on,—until, dashing the prow of the one across the gunwale of the other, the man sprang to the side of the rescued girl; and the man's voice says: "Oh Belle, how did you, how could you?" and the woman's voice says: "Oh Alfred, how did you, how could you?"

The doctor could hardly speak at all, as he was, to use a sporting phrase, "pretty badly blowed;" and Belle could hardly speak at all, for she was crying, a luxury in which she did not often indulge, but the reaction had

been so great, it was like being snatched from the grave itself back to life. For an instant she leaned her head upon the strong man's arm and cried; and then they took turns in rowing the boat back, which was a hard task against wind and waves. They had not much of an opportunity for talking, but Belle gave an account of how it all happened.

When at length they arrived on the beach near the boat-house, it was the most natural thing in the world that they should go to the nearest summer house to rest before proceeding to the Hall; and that it was the most natural thing in the world that Belle should say : " Alfred, (for these foolish lovers had adopted that dangerous habit of calling each other by their Christian names, without any handles,) that's twice you have saved my life."

" If I hadn't done it some one else would," said the doctor, trying to assume an indifference he did not feel.

" No, you needn't say that; you saved my life both times. What can I do to repay you ?"

" Oh, I'll make you repay me. I'll ask you to repay me sometime; see if I don't. But, did you see me on the shore ?"

"No; I didn't see anybody."

"Were you not very much frightened? Did you not think it was all over with you forever, well and good?"

"Oh, I didn't think of myself much; I thought more of how poor pa would feel when he found his girl was gone forever."

"Oh, yes; but didn't you think of how some one else would feel—of how I would feel, for instance. If you had gone to the bottom, I should have gone after you."

"Oh, yes; but you are not like poor pa; you have many friends, you make friends with everybody; but poor pa don't make many friends—and he is the best pa, too, that ever lived. You are a strong man, and he is hardly able to get around at all."

"Well, yes, that is right, that you should think of your father first."

"But I thought of you, too. Oh, I thought of so many things. I thought of how it would feel to be drowned, and lie down beneath the deep water; and I thought of the happy summer we had passed together; and home never seemed so dear to me before, and life so desirable. I believe I should die hard, for it seemed to me I wanted to live so much. And I thought of all my friends; of pa, and

brother, and you. Yes, I did think of you; there is no use denying it. I thought of you, and the night you carried me from the cars."

"I wish I had some one to think of me," said the doctor; and then, aware that in view of the previous remarks of Miss Belle, this was a rather silly speech, he made haste to amend it with—

"I wish some one thought of me; I mean, there is a certain person that I wish thought of me as I do of her—always."

The doctor had drawn very near, and put his arm around Miss Belle. He had not entered upon the duties of that afternoon with the slightest intention of making a declaration of love to this young lady; indeed, if any spirit had whispered in his ear that he should do that very thing that day, he could not have believed it; but circumstances he did not foresee had led up to the point where he was impelled beyond and out of all considerations but the one all-controlling, over-mastering consideration, that he truly loved the girl that he had just saved from a watery grave. So he put his arm very tenderly about her, and poured into her ears the story of his love for her; born on the night he carried her from the burning train; growing

stronger and stronger with every passing day; and wound up with this appeal :

"Now, dear Belle, may I hope that in return for all this love you will try and love me just a little ? I know that I am presumptuous, that I am asking a great deal, but won't you try to love me just a little ?"

There was a pause for an instant, while the doctor waited for his answer. Belle, looking down upon the ground, while a blush covered her face—adding to her beauty, as the doctor thought—then there was a shy glance into the doctor's face, and the soft voice uttered that dreadful word "No." That was the first word. "No, I cannot love you just a little; but (throwing her arms about the strong man's neck, and resting her head upon his shoulder,) I do love you, and I always shall love you a great deal, dear Alfred."

"Forever and forever ?" suggested the doctor.

"Yes, forever and forever."

Now, I do not know whether this is the way these matters should be attended to; whether it was right, and proper, and respectable, and all that. I do not pretend to be authority on that point. Really I am not

certain if this young lady ought not to have sidled off a little when this question was put to her in that manner, and said: "Oh dear, this is so sudden; I am so taken by surprise; I must have a little time to think it over, and ask pa, and brother, and consult with my minister, and be careful every step of the way."

I don't know that the scene here described would look all right to an indifferent spectator—and the worst of it was there had been a spectator of the whole scene. A man's head had bobbed up and down behind a rock that stood near the summer house, and the man that head belonged to was Dudley Feldkamp. He had been near enough (to use a parliamentary phrase,) to hear the speaking and see the acting. And he had been a calm, but not indifferent spectator of the whole affair.

In a few moments the happy couple were wending their way to the Hall, in full enjoyment of that bliss that comes to those who first taste the joys of requited love.

When they had got out of sight and sound, Mr. Dudley Feldkamp arose from his position behind the rock, in as much furor as it is possible for such weak specimens of man-

hood as him to be in. He ground the heel of one foot in the sand, and then the heel of the other. He used some very bad language, too; he mentioned a place several times that in spelling commences with the letter H, and the place was not Heaven. He made use of a word in close connection with the name of Isabella Oldcroft that in spelling commences with the letter D, and the word was not Duck; and he cursed himself, the doctor, and persons and things indiscriminately.

Now, if our readers think from this ebullition of wrath, that this man was now going to abduct Isabella Oldcroft, kill the doctor, or any other such mighty thing, they are mistaken. It was simply impossible that *this* man should do anything of the kind. He did not care enough for the girl to do it; he would be very glad to have Isabella and the estate, the estate especially. But if he did not get her, he would find some other that would do just as well. But he was very angry that this man had come here to interfere with his plans; he would wait, and be ready to make use of any mean, little, underhand advantage that chance threw in his way. But there was no danger of his taking any active measures to remove the incumbrance.

So these two men waited for something to turn up and drive this doctor away; and another man was determined *he should* be driven away. And these two lovers rode their horses, and rowed their boats, and climbed the hills, and explored the vales, and made visits of love and mercy, and wrapped the golden chains about each other in a web that could never be broken; forgetful of the past, oblivious of the future, living only in the glorious present. And the time approached for the usual birth-day party, always observed at Sea View, for Old Ralph had declared that his daughter's birth-day should always be observed as long as he lived. The time for this observance was the 6th of October, and was altogether the grandest affair that came off in that region; there being always many strangers from London, besides all of the resident gentry. It was the custom, if the weather permitted, to have out-door sports during the day and dancing at night.

CHAPTER IX.

THE QUARREL.

"He fiercely gave me the lie,
Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,
And he struck me, madman, over the face—
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gasping and grinning by.
Struck me himself an evil stroke,
Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe,
For front to front in an hour we stood,
And a million horrible echoes broke,
From the red-ribbed hollow behind the wood,
And thundered up into heaven the Christless code,
That must have life for a blow."

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

It was a brilliant party that assembled at Oldcroft Hall on the evening of October 6th, 1847, for this was the birth-day of the daughter of the house, and for years this day had been duly observed. Old Ralph insisting that this was the most important of all events, not excepting Thanksgiving, Christmas or New Year; and so he insisted upon the observance this year, although he was not able to be among his guests, but

kept his room, where they had to come if they wished to see him.

Lights streamed from window and balcony, turret and tower; and within the light of gems of the first water was reflected from the magnificent mirrors where fair women and brave men swung through the mazes of the dance or promenaded the large rooms; all seemed light and beauty, mirth and gladness.

But a demon was loose there, nevertheless. A demon that should bring trouble into the midst of this happy assembly and cast its dark shadow athwart the coming time.

The heir of all this wealth—the young man who it was supposed would sometime in the future be the master of this house—was drunk. When I say drunk, I do not mean that expression as it is ordinarily used, (for this young man had no, yet taken near his usual allowance of wine,) but he was under the excitement of wine, and just drunk enough to make his usually quarrelsome disposition still more quarrelsome; just drunk enough to lose his usual self-control (and he never had any to spare); just drunk enough to exalt and thrust for-

ward his then most prominent idea to the exclusion of all others, which idea was that this Doctor Mortimer was in his way; was interfering with his plans; that *he* hadn't invited him there; didn't want him there; and was determined he shouldn't stay there.

It must be said at the outset, if Old Ralph had been about, the disgraceful scene of that evening would never have occurred. He was not advised of the condition of his son and heir. Isabella, although fearing trouble, did not say anything to her father, for the simple reason that she knew both father and son well enough to realize that the son wanted to be master in that house, and Old Ralph would see his son and heir carried out a corpse before he would submit to any derogation of what he considered his lawful authority or breach of the rules of hospitality.

To add to the trouble, the man who, above all others, should have shown himself a gentleman, and frowned upon any attempt to insult a peaceable and unoffending guest, was egging on and encouraging this villain to the perpetration of some mischief. The man referred to was Dudley Feldkamp. Piqued because this young lady, whom he wished to make his wife, did not appreciate

the honor done her, but must needs have a preference for this doctor, and show that preference in an unmistakable manner. Here he was stooping to a low, despicable, villainous attempt to vent his spite through the medium of this half drunken man, who was all ready for any scheme of mischief, especially one that chimed in with his own inclinations.

Several times during the course of the evening was the doctor subjected to the most gross insults from the young man, his sister begging and entreating him, with tears in her eyes, to desist. Scarcely a minute passed without some scurrilous remark being hurled at the unfortunate physician; and all efforts of any one to draw the young man off on to some other tack proved unavailing.

As the doctor and Isabella were trying to promenade out of his way for a few moments, he rushed up, and snatched his sister's arm away, saying: "Come, Old Pill Bags, this won't do; here, Feldkamp, come here and tend to your business." But Mr. Feldkamp, knowing that such a gross breach of etiquette could not be passed over in silence, ventured to take the young man's arm, and whispering some words of advice to him, led him off.

In a few minutes he appeared again in the presence of the couple he had so grossly insulted, carrying Lady Mark's lap dog, (that was always the most persistent attendant upon all parties,) holding the dog directly in front of the doctor, he commenced: "Here, doctor, dogs nose this subject; you are good at dogs nosing;" then thrusting the dog in the doctor's face, he said: "See two dogs' noses together." Here the efforts of his sister and one of the gentlemen present succeeded in calling him off again.

At length the crisis was reached, as it must be in every case, a point beyond which you go not, at your peril.

The doctor was standing at a table of refreshments in an alcove, where several persons had retired outside of the crowd, and were having a good time on a small scale, when this spirit of evil must needs intrude again. Approaching the doctor, and attempting to pour some wine in his mouth, he said: "Here, Old Lolly Pop, we want to poison you, and get you out of the way; you are too good for this world." The doctor took the glass of wine and set it down upon the table, saying: "You have had too much wine already; you are drunk."

"What's that you say? Do you tell me I am drunk? I am no more drunk than you are."

"I tell you you *are* drunk; and more than that, I tell you you are no gentleman."

"I am *drunk*, am I? and I'm no gentleman. Who are you? where did you come from? who invited you here? I didn't. Who's master here, I want to know? I tell you *I* am master here; and I tell you now to *go*."

In spite of the efforts of his sister, who tried to pull him away, and begged and prayed him to cease, he went on :

"Who are you? You have no business here in this society; go to the society where you belong."

The doctor advanced, put his hand upon the bully, and said: "My friend, don't say too much; I have borne a good deal from you, but don't go too far. I warn you, that even *you* may go too far."

"Even *I* may go too far! hear him. Why, you puppy you, what will you do?" and, before any one could interfere, he snatched up the glass of wine from the table and dashed the contents in the doctor's face. Two gentlemen tried to hold the bully's arm, and many voices were heard crying shame.

The doctor wiped the wine from his face; and, although he was deadly pale, he spoke calmly and distinctly, so that every one in the long room could hear him :

"I do not settle my difficulties of this nature in the presence of ladies; but I tell you plainly, at the proper time and place you shall give me full satisfaction for the insults you have heaped upon me to-night. You say *you* are master here; so be it. I will go now from this place; but mark my words, when *I come here again you will not be master here.*" (As if to emphasize the words, he repeated): "*When I enter this house again you will not be master here.*"

These ominous words; what could they mean? They might mean but little; they might mean a great deal. The doctor, having had his say, was about to leave, but the bully commenced again :

"Not so fast, my good man, not so fast. You say you don't want to fight before the ladies? The ladies will retire, or we'll retire; there's plenty of room here. You white livered coward, you shall settle this matter *here, and now,*" and, wrenching himself from the hands that attempted to hold him, he rushed forward and struck the doctor a ter-

rible blow on the side of the face. Involuntarily the insulted man started forward as if he would crush the villain to the floor, but controlling himself with a tremendous effort, he pulled out his handkerchief and calmly wiped the blood from his face, and said :

" I repeat it, you will repent this. At another time and place you shall give me ample satisfaction. I will now go, and when *I enter this house again you will not be master here* "

The self-controlled white heat of the one man against the boyish, uncontrolled passion of the other was fearful. None looked upon this scene but said: "We have not seen the end of this yet." The doctor walked from the room, but the one who, of all others, he loved best, followed him into the hall, and hung upon his arm, sobbing and begging: "Don't go in this manner, Alfred. Come to my room; don't go away." The doctor, without making any reply, walked out of the door. The loving girl still clung to him, saying: "Alfred, I could not help this. If pa had been about it would not have happened; you know Ralph was drunk. Please, Alfred, don't go in this manner. The doctor put his arm tenderly about this, his really best earthly friend, and said :

"I know you could not avoid it. You are the best, dearest, sweetest, loveliest girl that ever lived; and you are the only being in the world that I love. I will bear anything that can be borne for your sake; and I have borne a great deal to-night, but I will never enter this house again while that wretch pretends to be master here. *When I enter this house again he will not be master here.*"

These ominous words repeated for the fourth time, and now in the presence of the woman whom he had sworn to love until death. What did they mean? There must be some meaning more than the empty passion which disappears on the morrow.

Stooping down, the doctor imprinted a long kiss upon the young lady's face. "Meet me to-morrow evening at seven o'clock, by the old crooked oak; till then be a good girl, and hope things will come out all right in the end." So saying, he disappeared on the avenue.

Isabella watched him until she could see him no longer, then hurried to hide her tears in the blessed solitude of her own room. But to go to this room she had to pass through pa's room; and when the old gentleman saw her in tears, which she could not prevent his

doing, he called her to him to know what this meant. With sobs that shook her whole frame, so that it was with difficulty that she could speak at all, she told pa of the scene that had been witnessed by his guests.

"And now he has gone, and will never come back again. And you remember the night, and you remember, pa, the night he first came. I should think you would not forget it; but brother Ralph has forgotten it, and has treated the doctor shamefully and disgraced us all, and declared *he was master* here."

Now, Old Ralph did not care so much for the doctor having to leave, but it is certain, that while he did stay, the old gentleman would never have insulted him, or seen him insulted under his roof, and this daughter, this idol of his heart, suffering and sobbing by his side. As he listened to the recital of the doings of his son and heir, his face grew dark, and there came over it that set, hard look, that deadly white which those who knew Old Ralph best, knew meant mischief.

Having comforted and consoled his daughter by saying: "The doctor should come back, *he was master* of that house, and no one should insult a guest there with impu-

nity," he sent her to her room, and rang his bell violently; a servant appeared immediately, for he knew what that sound meant—no trifling.

"Send John to me." John was the big man (in size) on the estate, the man always called upon in all emergencies when there was any rough fighting or heavy lifting to be done. John soon appeared; the old gentleman, bidding John follow, hobbled into the long drawing room, where most of the guests were assembled, discussing the scene they had just witnessed. The son and heir was in the act of balancing a cane upon his nose. He stopped, with a look of unfeigned surprise, as his parent made his appearance. He immediately realized the fact that trouble was coming, for he knew nothing else would have brought the old gentleman from his room. But he was drunk enough to determine to put a bold face upon the matter, and not be put down in the presence of his guests.

The old gentleman, with John at his heels, hobbled to the middle of the room, in front of the offender, and said :

"Ladies and gentlemen : I want you all to understand that I utterly repudiate this gross

indignity that has been put upon one of my guests here this evening. Had I been able to be here this should not have occurred."

Now, if the heir apparent had remained silent and manifested anything of a submissive spirit, the old gentleman would have done merely what he came into the room to do; John would have carried the young man off to his room and locked him in until he got sober. But instead of showing any such spirit, the young man spoke up immediately:

"Indeed! What would you have done about it?"

Not taking notice of the remark made by his son and heir, the old gentleman advanced close, until the two men stood looking intently in each other's faces, and said: "And you, sir; what do you mean by insulting a guest in *my* house?"

"*Your* house?"

Without noticing the insolence of the reply, the old gentleman went on: "And you have said several times to-night that *you* was master here. How about that?"

"I *have* said so several times. Now, what are you going to do about it?"

Old Ralph hobbled close up to the rebel, looked him steadily in the face for an instant,

shifted his crutch so that his left hand rested upon the top of it, leaving his right hand free, and said : "I will show you what I will do about it, and *I will show you who is master here.*" With a blow, swift and rapid as lightning dropping from a cloud, he struck the young rebel to the floor. It was but a single blow, but it was given full in the face, and by a hand that was weighty and sure, if it *was* old. There lay the heir of the house motionless upon the floor, his face covered with blood.

Turning to John, Old Ralph said : "Here, John, carry this fellow to his room, lock the door, and see that he stays there until further orders."

And so, for that night, ended the party commenced in such gladness, beauty and mirth. But could the coming events have cast their shadows before, the guests of that night would have started back in horror and alarm unfeigned, and prayed, "From all these evils, good Lord deliver us."

CHAPTER X.

THE MEETING.

"Vaunt not your western maids to me,
Whose charms to every gaze are free;
My love is selfish, and would share
Scarce with the sun or general air,
The sight of beauty which has shone
Once for mine eyes and mine alone.
Love likes concealment; he can dress
With fancied grace the loveliness
That shrinks behind its virgin veil,
As hides the moon her forehead pale
Behind a cloud, yet leaves the air
Softer than if her orb were there."

—*Bayard Taylor.*

The foot passenger proceeding along the gravel walk running toward the sea from Oldcroft Hall, after having passed the stile in the hedge and crossed the rustic bridge, comes upon a lovely spot, not directly upon the gravel walk, but a little to the left; so beautiful and attractive a spot that every stranger passing that way is tempted to turn aside and take a rest upon one of the rustic

seats, or in summer weather to make a couch upon the beautiful turf.

The first thing to attract attention to the spot was the tree that bore the name of "The Crooked Oak," and which gave the beholder the impression of having been twisted by lightning out of its natural shape, and still continuing to grow on in the same fashion in spite of these unfavorable circumstances. Close to the tree was a summer house, so overgrown with vines and wood-creepers as to form a rare place for a private meeting of any kind—either of politics, love or murder—so well protected from prying eyes that it was hardly possible any one should pry into the secrets that had their birth there.

Here, then, on the night following the party, between the hours of six and seven o'clock, stood a young man leaning against the crooked oak, evidently waiting for the appearance of some one; and judging from the frown that darkened his face his thoughts were not of the sweetest or most amiable nature.

To tell the truth, he had good reasons for being out of humor; for he was the man who had received such outrageous treatment the night before in presence of all the assem-

bled company at the Hall. And now he was indulging and nursing that ill humor, that fierce wrath, that he had kept so well under control the night before.

What business had this fiend in human shape to interfere with his love for this girl, any how? And was it possible that this outrageous bully was of the same blood as this pure, noble, loving girl? Brother and sister—one a born devil, the other an angel. What a muddle this world was, anyhow; what use was it trying to unravel the tangled skein of purposes and cross-purposes in which everything was wrapped? Better not try to unravel it.

If this man had injured him, and worldly policy, the customs of society, respectability, and all that sort of thing, prevented his knocking him down at once and stamping on him, why, then, wait your time. Wait for the opportunity; wait patiently for the time to come when your foot would be upon his neck, and you could stamp him into the earth as you would a worm.

As he thus thought his brow grew dark; and if the object of his wrath had appeared before him then (unless it was to beg his pardon,) he would have stamped him into the ground.

What business had this villain to destroy the happiness of two persons? Probably the walks, and rides, and the visits were all over; things of the past only. Their joys hereafter would be stolen sweets; and the old adage, "that true love never does run smooth," came into his mind. He had not got so far along yet as to bring philosophy to his aid—that philosophy that teaches that some of the most enjoyable things of earth perish just as they are possessed; that the best pleasure is often the pleasure of pursuit; and that sometimes the apples turn to ashes upon the lips of those who have struggled and fought to obtain them.

Suddenly the frown left his face and a beautiful smile took its place, for he caught sight of the coming of the one who was the cause of all this trouble—the apple of discord, for which men have been struggling and fighting ever since the time that Adam received an apple from the hand of Eve.

The frown left his face; the dark mood was, for the present, forgotten. He forgot the brother and thought only of the sister—this woman of his choice; the only one in the wide world he truly loved. He put his arm around her and drew her into the summer

house, saying : "How is my dear girl ? How has she got along since last night ? Has her brother turned her out of the house, too ?"

Now, the doctor had an object in this question, so common-place and matter of course. That object was to find out what had been the course of events, and what had been the behavior of the scape-grace brother after he left the place. He attained his object, for sister Belle told him the whole story—of the knock down, and of her father having declared that nobody should be insulted in his house.

This, of course, was gratifying and mollifying to the doctor's wounded feelings, and dear Belle hung around his neck and begged him not to be angry, and not to have any more quarrels with her brother. But here she could make no headway. The doctor, although in other things as tender and considerate of her feelings as the most exacting woman could have desired, was very decided at this point in letting her see that the time had passed for him to be any friend to her brother. He told his dear Belle that he had tried honestly to befriend and benefit this young man, but now he wanted him to keep

away from him; that was all he asked; and he would not be responsible for any consequences if he did not keep away from him.

Yes, there could be no doubt about it at all. The blow struck and the indignity suffered that night had roused a demon in the man who had always been so kind and loving to her; she could see it even through all his kindness of manner, his wonderful tenderness for her and his desire to please her; he could not keep the demon down. He must have an unconquerable hate burning in his breast when he tells the sister in the mildest manner, and with his arm tenderly pressing her to his side, that he will not get in any quarrel with her brother; that he will not hunt him out, but if he crosses his path he must look out for himself; he don't forgive him, and never intends to forgive him until he gives him reparation for the wrong done; that he meant just what he said the night before, and she nor anybody else need give him credit for anything more. He did not wish to fight any man in a drawing-room, or to be called from a drawing-room for the purpose of fighting, but he meant to have satisfaction for the insult, as he had stated the night before. If that satisfaction did not come in the

way of an apology, it must come in some other way.

Now, poor Belle had never seen this side of the character of the man she loved before, or even dreamed of it. She did not think any the less of him for it, or for telling her openly what he intended to do, instead of going about in a sneaking manner, as some others would have done; but from that moment her soul was filled with a vague, nameless terror that made her shiver, until the man to whom she clung noticed it, and tenderly, very tenderly, strove to lead her thoughts away from the yawning guif that his passion had disclosed. He told her that he loved her more than ever; that now the old times of riding, and rowing, and walking together were probably over; but that she should hear from him as often as possible, and she must meet him here whenever they could arrange it so as not to be discovered or disturbed; that their pleasures from this time would have to be stolen pleasures, and perhaps, on that account, sweeter than ever. That he was going to London in a few days, probably on the eleventh, and if so she should hear from him while there. He did not know how long he should be absent.

Belle clung to him and begged him not to quarrel with her brother; and, by way of leaving a good impression on the doctor's mind, told him that the heir apparent had got up that morning (which was not unusual with him after a spree) in a much better humor than before the knock down occurred—which had evidently done him good in more ways than one—that he had been unusually kind to her that morning. That he had left that day and gone down to Devonshire for the purpose of selling some land, and expected to return in about four days; had promised her an entire new outfit when he returned, telling her to get what she chose and he would pay for it, as he expected to bring back a big pile of money.

All this the doctor listened to without making any remarks upon. Then he told her again that he loved her more than ever, and now they would have troubles to contend with, but he should never falter in his devotion to her; and nothing should make any change in his love for her, or his determination to make her his wife some time in the future.

The lovely girl clung to him, and declared that nothing should ever separate them. She

loved pa, and wanted to please him; but in this matter she had made up her mind; "she would never marry any one but her dear Alfred, no matter what happened."

The doctor then led his lady love out into the moonlight, (for it had grown quite dark in the summer house,) and producing a very handsome diamond ring, placed it upon the finger that such rings are generally placed upon in such circumstances. Then he drew her to him and said :

"Dear Belle, you will be mine forever and forever ?"

Placing her arms about his neck, she said: "Dear Alfred, I will be yours forever and forever."

And so these two parted, to meet again. When ?

The four days passed until the eleventh, which was the day that the young heir of the house was expected back. During that time these two, who had sworn eternal love and fidelity, did not meet again; and what Belle suffered no one knew but herself. The change from the good old times of riding, walking and visiting, in company with the one she loved, was too much for her, and she suffered untold anguish; not so much in this

temporary separation as in an undefinable dread of the future. A dark cloud seemed to be pending which nothing could remove, and she feared the meeting of these two men who hated each other with a deadly hatred; she feared what the future might unfold to her vision, and waited, with anxiety, in anticipation of some calamity. She could not tell what, yet it was a palpable reality to her, and could not be shaken off.

On the morning of the fourth day nothing unusual had happened since the party. On that morning she heard from the doctor through old Mrs. Brown; that he was going to London on that afternoon. That was all she had heard from him since the interview at the summer house.

Her brother was expected back on this afternoon, and she was glad the doctor was going to London before his return, for then they would not meet, at least for the present; and she would rather get along without her dear Alfred for a few days than have him in danger, even though she had to put up with the torture of having this Dudley Feldkamp around, which he had been, ever since the night of the party.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MURDER.

"King Death has a high and lonely seat,
As other monarchs have,
Draped with a pall and winding sheet,
Brought from the last filled grave.
It is built of the gray and hollow skulls,
Of the cross-bones thick and strong,
And nothing lives there that seat to share
But the earth-worm trailing along.
And King Death sits on his spectral throne,
With his footstool made of churchyard stone."
—*Eliza Cook.*

The master of Oldcroft Hall sat in his own private room, near the close of day. It was a very comfortable and elegantly furnished room, with everything that the wants or whims of an invalid might demand, but Ralph Oldcroft was not comfortable; indeed, he was in a villainous bad humor, even for him.

Here had he been waiting all day for an opportunity to have it out with this prospective son-in-law of his, and he had seemed

to avoid him. He paced the room in a state of ungovernable anger, and for the hundredth time approached the window, which commanded a view of the lawn for a long distance back.

The object of his anxiety, the member of parliament, was approaching in a leisurely manner, twirling an elegant cane in his hand, seemingly well satisfied with himself and the rest of creation.

Ralph Oldcroft rang his bell savagely; it was answered at once. "Send Mr. Feldkamp to me."

When Mr. Feldkamp made his appearance, even *he* (although used to the humors of his would-be father-in-law) was surprised at the warmth of his reception.

"Where the devil have you been all day?" Not waiting for a reply to this very civil question, the old gentleman continued: "Here have I been waiting all day to have a talk with you, and you are traipsing all over creation; I tell you, sir, this thing must stop, and at once; we must come to a settlement. At your age *I knew my own mind* if I didn't know anything else; but you do n't know your own mind; you know my mind; you have known it for a long time, and ought to know your own."

The member of parliament ventured to suggest that it might be necessary to consult the wishes of a third party.

"Yes, yes; you know that I love my daughter more than you *can*. No one can say that I have not always done the very best for Belle that I knew how. She is the light of my eyes, my all that I have left to live for; and just for that very reason I am not going to have her throw herself away on a contemptible country doctor! I will put an end to it, though she may die; she sometimes looks as if she would, and when she dies I will cut my throat, and that will be the end of it. But you are the one to blame; you are like all the girls, you don't know your own mind; they do n't know theirs until they get settled down and married, and then everything is all right. You must get more gristle in your back bone, and not let this country doctor cut you out entirely, and put me in my grave before my time." Now, Dudley Feldkamp, member of parliament, did not relish being called a girl, and bombarded in this style, without a chance to return a single shot; but he was getting restive under these attacks, and there is no telling what might have happened had

the interview not been interrupted by the appearance of the bone of contention, that is, Miss Belle herself.

Upon her entrance, Dudley Feldkamp jumped to his feet as if stung. The girl was deadly pale; she carried quite a large bundle, and tottered as if she would have fallen. Mr. Feldkamp advanced to catch her falling form, but she rudely thrust him off. Old Ralph, changing the tone in which he had been speaking to accents of the most winning tenderness, hobbled to his daughter, saying: "My dear Belle, what is the matter? Why do you tire yourself out in this manner? Why do n't you have a carriage, instead of taking these long walks, and with that heavy bundle, too? Have you not servants enough to carry your bundles?" So saying, he partly led, partly forced the fainting girl on to the sofa, and attempted to take hold of her hands. Mr. Feldkamp, also, as in duty bound to do something, tried to remove the bundle which she held in her lap. Suddenly jumping up, she thrust them both aside, screaming out, "*Let me go! I will go!*" And clasping the bundle tightly in her arms, she rushed to her own room.

"Now you see, what did I tell you?" And

here followed a blistering string of oaths, directed at the devoted head of the member of parliament. "What did I tell you? This thing must stop! Now, once for all, I tell you you must and shall bring this matter to a decision. Why do n't you pay attention to me? What are you staring out of the window for?" Mr. Feldkamp was indeed staring out of the window. There seemed to be something unusual going on: screams were heard, and persons were seen running toward the hedge at the back of the Hall. Mr. Feldkamp, glad of an excuse to get away, ran out to see what was the matter. The old gentleman hobbled to the window, saying, "Has the whole house gone mad?" Turning, he rang the bell angrily; but no one answered that bell. Leaving him engaged in this delightful occupation, we will endeavor to give the reader a concise account of what was the matter.

About one-half a mile back of Oldcroft Hall ran a thick set hedge, in which was a stile at the intersection of the gravel walk that ran from the back of the house; this was the way most frequently taken by those foot passengers who wished to go to the village, or the cottages, or to the sea shore. A short

distance from the point where the stile intersected the hedge ran another hedge, north and south, so that there was an angle formed by the two hedges. In this angle, after passing over the stile, a person was almost entirely hidden from the view of any one approaching in either direction. About twenty yards beyond the stile the ground dropped abruptly into the valley formed by the little stream. At this point were solid stone steps; and such was the location of the ground between the hedge and the steps that it was hardly possible for any one, after passing over the stile, to see or be seen for a short distance.

On the evening of October 11th, 1847, about dusk, the body of a man was discovered between the stile and the steps; a body from which life had fled absolutely and forever. A fearful wound in the breast indicated that death must have followed immediately after the blow, without any other cause. But the head was gone, and the clothes nearly all cut from the body, as if the murderer had intended thus to destroy all possibility of identification. Enough was left, however, with the underclothes, and also by a peculiar mark on the left thigh, to

identify it as the body of Ralph Oldcroft the younger, the young man expected home on this evening.

The body had been first discovered by one of the house maids, returning from the village, who had rushed to the Hall, screaming "Murder!" at the top of her voice. A silver probe was picked up near the body, and a short distance off, near to a snare which was fastened to a tree by a rope, the handle of a knife was found, leading to the supposition that the murderer had fallen over the rope and dropped this evidence of his guilt.

This knife, or dagger rather, was different from anything that any one in that region had ever seen: the haft was of ivory heavily mounted with gold, and had a very heavy guard between the blade and handle; the blade had evidently been snapped off short near the haft by the force of the blow. Lanterns were brought and a thorough search made. Then the body being carried to the house, the first and most obvious course of proceeding was to probe for the blade of the knife; but no blade was found. After working for some time the wound was cut open; the only result was to prove conclusively that the blade was not there.

Here, then, was wide room for conjecture; the murderer had taken the head and left the body; he had taken the blade and left the haft. The spot was again visited and the most thorough search made, first in the immediate locality, then extending in every direction; but nothing more was discovered, no further light was thrown upon the mystery.

About eleven o'clock in the evening, as the old housekeeper, Mrs. Robbins, was as usual going her rounds to see if everything was right in her department, her nose was saluted by the smell of something burning; and as this was one thing she was always looking for, she traced up the scent to the master's room, and having looked in and found nothing she followed her nose still to "my young lady's room;" here there was no doubt about it, that was the place the odor proceeded from.

Now Belle had kept her room most of the time during the whole evening, only coming out occasionally; and indeed, as any one could see, she was so completely overcome with horror and distress as to be unable to stand up but a few moments at a time. The door of her room was fast, and only after

much difficulty and solicitation on the part of her father, was she induced to open the door; but when the door was opened nothing was seen but the agonized face of the young girl, who said she was sick and begged to be let alone. In reply to her father she said "Yes, she had been burning some rags. Would Mrs. Robbins please bring her some water, and let her alone?"

We will not disguise from the reader that there were some ugly looking things connected with this affair of the murder, which, upon the very face of them, would lead to suspicion; but as neither the coroner's jury nor the police, by the most rigid and thorough investigation, were able to find out sufficient to warrant the arrest of any one—in fact, every one explained their whereabouts and wherefores, on that eventful evening, in a manner that was satisfactory to some of the metropolitan detective force—we must e'en do as they did, give them the go-by for the present.

A dispatch was sent immediately for an officer to be sent down from London and assist in the investigation on the morrow.

It is proper here to state that further investigation developed these facts: The young

man had sold the property, receiving in payment £5300, of which £1200 was in bills, and on his person at the time of the murder; which fact was proved conclusively by inquiries at the bank, where he had procured drafts for £4100 and received in money £1200. It was also ascertained that he had come directly from Devonshire to West Cove without making a stop at any point.

Mr. Robert Keller, who had not been present immediately after the discovery of the murder, returned to the stables about nine o'clock, himself and horse covered with mud, and stated that he had rode so near the bank of the stream in the dark, that himself and horse turned a summersault into the bed of the stream; and as he was so lame as to be scarcely able to walk, he rode to the door of his own house and sent a boy back to the stables with the horse.

At midnight a violent storm commenced, and the rain fell heavily from that time till daybreak. By morning the little brook had become a wide and deep stream.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE TRAIL.

"I was a stripling, quick and bold,
And rich in pride as poor in gold ;
When God's good will my journey bent,
One day to Shekh Abdallah's tent.
My only treasure was a steed,
Of Araby's most precious breed ;
And whether 'twas in boastful whim
To show his mettled speed of limb,
Or that presumption, which, in sooth,
Becomes the careless brow of youth—
Which takes the world as birds the air,
And moves in freedom everywhere—
It matters not. But midst the tents
I rode in easy confidence,
Till to Abdallah's door I pressed,
And made myself the old man's guest."
—*Bayard Taylor.*

When the dispatch requesting the presence of a detective at West Cove reached London, Billy Berrege and Ed Downing, the two most efficient of the city police, were absent on another job; and it fell to the lot of Jordan Scroggs, as being the only one of the force to be spared, to attend upon this case.

Now Jordan Scroggs had formerly been a lawyer, and not succeeding very well at making a living in this branch of the profession, he had naturally slid into the detective branch. With the most unblushing assurance, and an impression that he could do anything that mortal man could, he joined a total lack of anything that could ever give him eminence in the detective line. He had his two professions so badly mixed in his own mind that he could not by any possibility distinctively classify them; and worst of all, he was not able at any time to assume that dignity which is sometimes necessary in the duties of examining witnesses. He retained his old habit of asking witnesses "May I," "Will you please," &c., and by no possibility would the least atom of judicial dignity adhere to this little bag of wind, which the most superficial observer could discover in the person of Jordan Scroggs.

There was one other person who came down from London at the same time as did Mr. Scroggs, of whom we must give a short description, as he played no less important a part in that day's proceedings than Jordan Scroggs himself.

This was a young man, or boy, (it was

hard to tell which,) from fifteen to twenty-five years of age; he might be still younger or still older for all that any one could discover by the usual methods of ascertaining such facts. His face indicated that he had been the victim of some kind of an accident, perhaps a powder explosion. On his head was the remnant of an old hat, tipped on one side so as to cover up one eye entirely; and his whole appearance suggested the idea that he had been used for cannon wadding during a long seige.

At his heels followed the most villainous specimen of the bull-dog breed that the eye of man ever rested upon. The impression produced upon any one seeing this interesting animal was that he was three parts head and teeth, and the other fourth legs, and no tail.

As soon as this interesting couple put foot upon the Oldcroft estate, every dog belonging to the estate seemed to be put on his mettle to have a brush with the enemy, and a constant succession of skirmishes ensued, only prevented from ending in a general chaw-up by the efforts of all the bystanders to maintain peace. This animated scarecrow would not have attracted much attention had

it not been for his constant sallies directed at Jordan Scroggs, such as, "Go it old horse; you are not the man for this business; only give me a chance, and I'll settle it in no time. I know more than you do about this spill out." He was several times warned that he would get in the lock-up before night.

The only answer to these suggestions was a most awful squint, an appalling gravity, or an appearance of hopeless idiocy, while Bull always gave a low growl and showed his teeth, seeming to understand when his master was threatened.

When Jordan Scroggs arrived his first proceeding was in company with the local authorities, to go over the estate, making another search, which occupied about half of the day; taking, as he said, a promiscuous smell around before proceeding to call together every one belonging to the establishment, which he did after dinner. The court assembled in one of the large dining halls, and into this room came the ever-present bundle of rags accompanied by Bull, and also two dogs belonging to the estate, waiting patiently for an opportunity to attack their sworn enemy.

We will not go through the details of the

trial, as no new facts were adduced. All the force that Jordan Scroggs and his ponderous dignity could bring to bear was wasted in unavailing efforts to throw the witnesses out of the rut into which they had run on the previous day. The handle of the knife was produced, and lay upon the table used by the reporters. No one knew anything about the knife, or had ever seen such a one before.

A startling and unlooked-for digression was made soon after opening the proceedings. The ugly looking owner of Bull had several times been requested to keep quiet, and Jordan Scroggs had several times requested that Bull be ejected from the temple of justice, but no one seemed willing to undertake the job. Suddenly there was a most appalling yelp, that made every one in the room rise to his feet. This demoniacal screech seemed to come from beneath the chair of Jordan Scroggs, and his honor jumped about ten feet, overturning one of the local justices in his flight. In an instant the three dogs had joined in mortal combat, and every one in the neighborhood of the combatants tried to get out of the way. The table was overturned, and men, chairs, dogs, table, books and papers were mingled in a promiscuous muddle.

When the first scare was over, and the smoke of the conflict began to clear away, the dogs belonging to the estate retired from the temple of justice and field of battle, evidently in bad order, as one had just one ear less than when he came in, the other on three legs, and a patch taken out of his hide, corresponding in size with Bull's countenance.

As soon as Jordan Scroggs recovered his feet and his breath he yelled at the top of his voice, "Arrest that man!" Immediately a constable placed his hand upon the individual referred to, who stood as calm and unruffled as if he had never met with anything to disturb his perfect equanimity, and, with an air of the most patronizing condescension, said: "Do n't put yourself to any inconvenience on my account. I am not at all in a hurry; I can wait. Take your own time; I do not wish to interrupt these proceedings at all."

"Put out that dog!" roared the irate Scroggs. Mr. Robert Keller advanced to show his skill in that direction, as no one else seemed to hanker after the job; but when Bull's smiling countenance—lit up with a row of magnificent teeth, as he sat in

perfect satisfaction after his meal of dog—met his gaze, Mr. Keller seemed to think that the best time in some fights is before the commencement, and to be inclined to extend that time as far as possible, some one suggested that, as the other dogs had retired, Bull be permitted to remain. Jordan Scroggs accepted the compromise with his usual dignity.

The trial dragged through, and as nothing new was elicited, every one would have been tired of it had it not been for the constant digressions made by the party under arrest, calling out, "Go in, Scroggs! I bet on you! You do n't know nothing! I'm the man for you; I can put something under your wool!" and many other phrases of slang, unfit to be produced here.

At last, Jordan Scroggs having reached a point where he might say he had done all that the circumstances would admit of, called out: "Now, my man, it's your turn; we'll see what you *do* know about this business. Clerk, swear this man."

This being a veritable history, and not aspiring to be anything more, we will not attempt to re-produce the peals of laughter, and cries of "Go on!" "Put him out!" "Or-

der, order!" We could not, by any words in the English language, give but a faint idea of the imperturbable gravity of the witness, alternated with the most utter idiocy or the most abject wretchedness. We will be content to give an exact record of the examination.

Putting on his most extreme air of judicial acumen, Scroggs commenced:

"Well, my man, I suppose you know the solemn nature of an oath."

No answer. The question repeated in a louder tone.

Witness—"Who?"

Question repeated verbatim; answer repeated verbatim.

Scroggs—"You know what an oath is, I suppose."

A glimpse of returning reason lights up the features of the witness. "Oh yes; I hear enough on it to know that."

Scroggs—"Well, you are under oath; and if your answers are not satisfactory you will soon be in prison. Your name?"

Witness—"Who?"

Scroggs—"You; your name?"

Witness—"Oh yes; Jedediah, Samuel, Erastus, Kent, Bates, summer blossom—"

Scroggs—"Hold on! hold on! If you have any more name keep it till the next time you are arrested."

Witness—"Just as you please. Do n't put yourself to any inconvenience on my account; I can wait."

Scroggs—"Residence?"

Witness—"Who?"

Scroggs—"Your residence! the place where you live when you are at home?"

Witness—"Oh! ah, yes. England, Wales, United States of America, Venice, Labrador, Cape of Good Hope, Tropic of Capricorn—"

Scroggs—"Hold on, hold on!"

Witness—"Yes, sir, I am holding on with all my might. Bay of Biscay, Atlantic ocean—"

Scroggs—"Will somebody stop that d—d idiot? Do you live in London?"

Witness—"Oh! ah, yes; in London."

Scroggs—"In what part of London do you reside?"

Witness—"Not in any part."

Scroggs—"On what street?"

Witness—"Not on any street. I don't live on a street. Policemen live there; I would n't live along with them for anything."

Scroggs—"I fine you 3£ for contempt of court."

Witness—(Pulling out a check book) "All right, sir. You shall not lose anything by me; that matter shall be settled immediately." And calling for a pen from one of the reporters, he immediately filled up and signed a check for the sum of 3£ and handed it to Jordan Scroggs, saying: "I am apt to forget if I do n't settle these matters at once."

Scroggs—"Your occupation?"

Witness—"Who?"

Scroggs—"You; your occupation. What do you do for a living?"

Witness—"Oh! ah! yes. I scratch gravel."

Scroggs—"What do you mean by that? Can you inform this court what scratching gravel means?"

Witness—"I can't show you in here; but if you will come out of doors I will show you how it is done."

Scroggs—"Have you no other occupation?"

Witness—"Yes. Monkey doctor."

Scroggs—"Well, what is a monkey doctor?"

Witness—"Monkeys have too much brains, and when they get sick we cut off their tails

and slap on a plaster that draws the inflammation from the head."

Scroggs—"Now, see here, my man, I am going to put some serious questions to you. You are under arrest for being in some way mixed up with this affair, and you have been heard by a great many persons here present to say you know something about it. I shall send you to jail if your answers are not satisfactory. What do you know about this business?"

Witness—"Did I say I knew anything about it?"

Scroggs—"Yes; you said so several times."

Witness—"Ah! Thank you for reminding me of it. I am forgetful. I used to be an uncommon bright chap, but I met with an accident that destroyed my mind. I do not remember good since."

Here one of the local authorities suggested that it might be very important to ascertain the nature of this accident, as showing whether the witness was competent to give testimony.

Scroggs—"I suppose you refer to the accident that disfigured your face?"

Witness—"Not much."

Scroggs—"May I ask you to what accident you refer, then?"

Witness—"You may."

Scroggs—"Come, don't take up the time of the court. What was it?"

Witness—"Why, I bet Johnny Chubbs that I could eat a peck of shrimps at one sitting, and I done it; but it injured my mind for life. Old Doctor Owlis says I shall never recover from it."

Scroggs—"Now, see here, my man, what do you know about this case?"

Witness—"What case?"

Scroggs—"The murder. What do you know in relation to the deceased, the murdered man?"

Witness—"I hadn't the honor of his acquaintance."

Scroggs—"Come, now, tell what you know or go to jail."

Witness—"Just as you please. Don't put yourself to any inconvenience. I can wait."

Scroggs—"Do you know or have you seen anything that will throw any light on this matter?"

Witness—"Let me see. Yes, I have seen something."

Scroggs—"Well, what is it? Something belonging to the murdered man?"

Witness—"Something he would like to have if he could get it."

Scroggs—"Well, what is it? Your time is nearly up; be quick. To jail you go if I don't get something out of you."

Witness—"Just as you please. Don't put yourself to any inconvenience—"

Scroggs—"See here, my man; for the last time I ask you: what did you see bearing on this case?"

Witness—"I saw his meat masher."

Scroggs—"Meat masher; what's that?"

Witness—"That's what I call it. Some call it bread mill, some sassage stuffer; I call it meat masher."

Head, suggested one of the local authorities.

Witness—"Right; (pulling out an account book from his pocket,) that's it; give me your name. I would like to shake hands with such a man as you." (No notice being taken of this proposal, the witness, with a look of patient resignation, returns the account book to his pocket.)

At the mention of the word *head* there had been an evident flutter all over the room; the justices put their heads together and held an earnest consultation. An idea seemed to be forcing its way through the head of Jordan Scroggs; he began to catch glimpses of

coming glory. This, then, was the insane man that had done the deed of murder. With a look of triumph he again took up the course of investigation.

Scroggs—"Do you mean to tell me, then, you saw the head of this man to-day?"

Witness—"I did not say I saw this man's head."

Scroggs—"Well, did you see a head to-day detached from the body, that is, without any body near it?"

Witness—"I did not see any body nearer to it than my body."

Scroggs—"Now, my man, this is a serious business, and you must answer my questions as straight as possible. Where did you see this head?"

Witness—"Who?"

Scroggs—"This head! where did you see it?"

Witness—"Hydrostatics."

Scroggs—"What do you mean?"

Witness—"Hydrostatics—rising and falling in Hydrostatics."

"Water," suggested the same authority that had spoken before.

Witness—"There it is again!" (producing his account book.) "See here; give me

your name now, won't you? It is a pity a man of your parts should waste a brilliant intellect in this out-of-the-way place."

Scroggs—"May I inquire in what water you saw this head?"

Witness—"You may."

Scroggs—"Well, where was it?"

Witness—"It was n't on the Bay of Biscay, or the Gulf of Mexico, or—"

Scroggs—"Hold on, hold on! I did not ask you where it was *not*, but where it *was*. Now, I ask you again, was it on water near here? Was it on the course of this stream that runs through the estate?"

Witness—"Now this looks like business; that's the first sensible question you have asked me to-day. It was."

Scroggs—"Could you designate the place if some one went with you there?"

Witness—(With an awful squint) "Yes, I guess I might; that is," (assuming a look of the most abject misery) "if my mind do n't give out."

Of course every one was now on the verge of the most intense excitement, for although there were doubts as to the reliability or sanity of the witness, there was enough in prospect to stimulate intense curiosity to know what was

hidden under all this flummery. So as soon as possible all started for the stream, the constable keeping a tight hold of Erastus Kent Bates, and Bull walking at his master's heel with an extra amount of watchfulness in the corners of his eyes.

A short distance from the point where the stream of Meadow Brook empties into the ocean it makes a sharp curve. At this point a mass of drift-wood, carried down by the flood of the night before, had made a lodgment. This is the place where Erastus Kent Bates ordered a halt, and as the crowd pressed forward to the point where the apparition might be expected to appear, there, sure enough, was the missing object—the one thing necessary at this time to make Jordan Scroggs happy. A ghastly object, to be sure, as it rose and fell with the motion of the water, the deathly white face half hidden by long hair. (The deceased was known to wear his hair long.)

In a voice that could hardly be controlled so as to be heard at all, Jordan Scroggs ordered a pole to be procured, and all pressed forward near the bank to catch a view of the ghastly object as soon as it should be fished up. It proved to be a hard task, for

the head was fastened in some way, and refused to respond to all the tugging that could be put on the pole.

Jordan Scroggs was bent far over the stream, giving directions and holding on by a clump of willows, and his late witness was immediately behind him, all intent upon the matter in hand, when suddenly Jordan Scroggs received a fearful kick on that part of his body farthest inland that sent him head first into the stream. At the same time the constable received a back-handed blow full in the face, and although he held on to his man, the dog was at his throat in an instant and he was compelled to let go. Before any one realized what had happened, Erastus Kent Bates and the dog had disappeared from sight.

But the *head* was left, and after being brought to shore with much difficulty, proved to be a very good head indeed, a solid head in a very good state of preservation; for it was in fact a *wooden* head; a show block with a little addition that the ingenuity of Erastus Kent Bates had suggested.

Nor was this the full chapter of the day's misfortunes; for upon returning to the Hall it was for the first time discovered that the

handle of the knife was gone. The only reasonable supposition was that Jedediah Erastus Kent Bates, Bull and the knife handle had gone off in company.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANOTHER MURDER.

"I was betrayed, ay, e'en to life;
Sedition round and death in view.
And they who see the assassin's knife
Must aptly think and promptly do.
My love was wrecked, my faith deceived;
The strokes that ever madden most.
Without these all had been retrieved;
With them I cared not what was lost."

—*Eliza Cook.*

On the day following the murder (which was the twelfth of October, and the day on which occurred the incidents narrated in the last chapter), Doctor Mortimer did not make his appearance at West Cove; but in answer to a dispatch stating the circumstances of the murder he replied that he would be down soon. There is no denying but there was enough in the circumstances of the recent quarrel between the murdered man and Dr. Mortimer, also something very much like threats uttered by the doctor since the quarrel, to turn investigation naturally and

unavoidably in that direction; and on the morning of the thirteenth of October a dispatch was sent to the headquarters of the metropolitan police directing them to watch the man therein described, and if he attempted to leave the city in any other direction than to come to West Cove to arrest him. But on the evening of that day a new incident was discovered that made it highly improbable that the doctor would come to West Cove very soon.

Gilleting's Evening Reporter of the 13th of October contained the following startling item:

"Just as we go to press, and too late for particulars, another horrible murder is discovered in our midst. All that we are now able to ascertain is that a headless body has been discovered in room 367, Bigbee's Hotel, supposed to be the body of Alfred Mortimer, of West Cove. We will give the facts in full in our morning edition."

The facts as developed at the inquest the next day were these: On the morning of October 12th, a stranger arrived at Bigbee's Hotel; evidently he had come in on the early morning train. He had registered his name as Alfred Mortimer. He brought no bag-

gage but a large valise, rather the worse for wear. During the day, he was seen going in and out several times. He purchased a large trunk and had it carried to his room. The impression produced upon the minds of the inmates of the hotel was that this was some country man purchasing articles in the city, and among other things a new trunk, which he evidently needed.

Nothing unusual was noticed in his conduct at any time. He took breakfast, dinner and supper at the hotel, and it was positively known had retired to his room at an early hour in the evening. The next day, No. 367 remaining closed so that the chambermaid could not get into the room, and no attention being paid to repeated attacks upon the door, at 3:30 o'clock in the afternoon the door was forced open and the body of a man found weltering in blood upon the bed, with a ghastly wound in the breast and no trace of the head. Papers were scattered over the room, and the clothes of the murdered man lay on a chair near the foot of the bed. Several letters directed to Dr. Mortimer were found in the pockets, and some on the floor.

A balcony ran along the front of the room,

and the window was still raised where the murderer had evidently made his escape. Directly under the window on the floor lay a certificate of deposit for 50£, drawn by the banking house of Lang & Nordhoff, in favor of Alfred Mortimer. The clerk of Lang & Nordhoff, who had issued the certificate, being called and sworn, testified that on the day before, a stranger—wearing the clothes found in the room, and which he identified more particularly by a scarf-pin of a peculiar appearance, which had attracted his attention, and which still remained fastened to the scarf—had made his appearance at the counter of the bank. The stranger brought checks from several parties in West Cove, amounting to 1,733£. At his request he had given him 200£ in bills, and their own certificates of deposit in two amounts: one for 1,483£ and the other for 50£. The police did not have the trouble of tracing the certificate for 1,483£, for the man who could tell more about that certificate than any other man in London was on hand, ready for business. This man was no other than our esteemed friend Lazarus Operman, who voluntarily appeared and threw some additional light upon the subject. Being sworn,

our esteemed friend stated as preliminary to what was to follow, that he kept a bank that run at pretty much all the hours of the day and night; he was in the habit of accommodating those parties who were too lazy or too late to do business at the regular banking hours, provided only they were willing to pay a good, round sum for the privilege of doing business in this illegitimate way. That on the morning of the 13th of October a stranger had made his appearance at his place of business. This stranger Mr. Operman represented as being an unusually respectable, nice-looking, well-dressed man. This man presented a certificate of deposit on Lang & Nordhoff, requesting cash for it, stating that the bank would not be open for some time and it was very important that he should leave the city immediately, as he had just received unexpected news in regard to some business in the country, and money was not an object if he could only be in time to take the train that would leave in a short time. Lazarus Operman immediately sent his faithful ally, Israel Mundy, to obtain access to Lang & Nordhoff's place of business by means best known to himself. Israel Mundy ascertained that Lang & Nordhoff

had issued such a certificate to Dr. Mortimer, and calling for the signature book, made a deep impression upon his mind of the handwriting of Alfred Mortimer, and returning to his master reported things all right. The stranger indorsed the certificate in their presence and received the sum of 1,483£, less 25£ for the trouble.

As Mr. Operman had felt entirely certain the certificate was all right, he had not taken the trouble to collect it at once, but hearing of the murder connected with the name of Alfred Mortimer, had hurried to the bank requesting payment which of course was refused; and being very much exercised in his mind, a fearful amount of bad language had been used by the unfortunate Jew, directed at the clerk who had managed the business with Israel Mundy. "He would like to know if they were not in the habit of paying their own certificates, especially after a party had taken extra trouble to find out whether the indorsement was correct?"

The answer received from a member of the firm was final and conclusive:

"Oh, yes; they were in the habit of taking up all their paper *once*, but did not want to run the risk of having to take it up *twice*.

This was an unusual case; had never in the course of a long business experience met with a parallel case. Would rather wait and ascertain whether Alfred Mortimer had his head on at the time he indorsed the certificate. In fact, they declined to pay it until that fact was settled."

Mr. Operman was asked if the party who indorsed the certificate wore the clothes which were found in the room.

"No; he did not."

"Could Mr. Operman describe the man? Would he know him if he was to see him again?"

"Yes, he was very certain he should know him if he could get a sight of him; but was very much afraid he should not have the satisfaction of seeing him again."

Mr. Robert Keller, called to identify the body, was asked if there was any mark by which he would know the body there before him to be the body of Alfred Mortimer. He stated that several weeks previous to this Dr. Mortimer had met with an accident through his horse running away and throwing him from his vehicle; that there was an ugly wound on the left leg that he remembered the doctor had himself said would

probably leave a permanent scar. Being requested to point out the spot on the leg, he did so; sure enough, there was the scar, and also the appearance usually produced by the settling of blood around bruises of that character.

So far, identification was complete. As accurate a description as Mr. Operman could give was furnished to the police to work upon in that direction. And there was also another starting point for investigation, which was this:

A man had been seen with Dr. Mortimer on the day he came to the hotel. This man had been present when the trunk was carried to the room; and he had been seen going and coming with the doctor, and even on the morning of the day on which the murder was discovered, he had called upon the clerk of the hotel, making inquiries for the doctor and manifesting a great deal of interest in his affairs. This man had disappeared; no one knew anything about him, had ever seen him before, or could give the slightest information concerning him.

There was a broken link in the chain right there, and it was necessary to supply its place in some way before investigation went any farther in that direction.

The headless body was taken down to rest in the cemetery at West Cove. And so these two men who had hated each other with such deadly hatred at the close of life, now lay side by side.

How was it with the young girl who loved both these men? One as her natural brother, the other as her companion, lover, and the one to whom she had given all her affections and sworn lasting fidelity for all time. What a fearful change had come in the short space of three days! Now the walks, the rides and the visits in the company of this loved one were indeed at an end; and the bliss of loving and being loved exchanged for a hopeless grief. How was it with her?

There is no denying there was some fearful mystery connected with this affair of the murder; something demanding the most careful and delicate exercise of the detectives' skill—the skill of a competent, experienced, and, at the same time, bold hand. So we will e'en put the case in such hands and await further developments.

CHAPTER XIV.

BILLY BERREGE INVESTIGATES.

"How welcome are the words that tell
The culprit, doomed to death and pain,
That he may quit his chains and cell,
And rove the world all free again!
How precious is the ray of light
That breaks upon the blind one's eye,
Unfolding to his wondrous sight
The glorious scenes of earth and sky!
But never to despairing ear,
Or helpless orb was aught so dear
As he to me appeared to be
In that dark hour of flight and fear."
—*Eliza Cook.*

On the return of Mr. William Berrege from the expedition that necessitated his absence at the time when these horrible murders were committed, it devolved upon him to go down to West Cove and go over the ground of his predecessor and see if he could throw any light upon this unusually dark subject.

Billy Berrege was the most important member of the police force, and was known

to be such by all persons who knew anything about the matter, or who had occasion to employ him. He was not a man of brilliant parts, but had reached his present position on the detective force solely by his known character of dogged and stubborn persistence. He was never daunted, never discouraged by anything, and, moreover, had that most important faculty in his profession, an imperturbable coolness. Nothing ever surprised him. Had St. Paul's Cathedral taken an inverted position and stood on the extreme point of its own spire, he would, if requested, have gone coolly to work to investigate the cause of this phenomenon.

As well might a hare double in the face of a hound, as a criminal try to double on Billy Berrege. He might lose the trail, but he would find it again after years, and take it up right where he dropped it. He had four cardinal maxims from which he never permitted himself to deviate. Maxim No. 1—Never intrust very important business to any one else, but do it yourself. Maxim No. 2—Never despise the day of small things. Maxim No. 3—Never be discouraged, no matter how desperate the circumstances may be. And maxim No. 4—Always keep your case perfectly dark until complete.

Upon arriving at West Cove, Mr. Berrege went over all the ground and caught up all the threads that his subordinate had left; ascertained from every one, both on the estate and off, all that could be learned, or that he supposed could help the case in any way. But his investigations at the close of the second day did not seem to result in anything. If they suggested anything he kept it close as a secret within his own breast.

On the morning of the third day, if he had been any other member of the police force, he would probably have been ready to leave, declaring there was nothing more to be done. But he was not any other member, so he stayed; and, having nothing else to do, concluded to put one of his maxims in operation, and take a journey by himself over the estate. He had previously been all over in company with the local authorities, and Mr. Robert Keller now offered to go with him as often as he wished; but Mr. Berrege preferred his own company, and told Mr. Keller so in a polite but decided manner.

The first half day resulted in no new discoveries; the afternoon had been nearly spent in the same fruitless manner, and Mr. Berrege was returning to rest for the night,

when his quick glance detected a very small piece of what seemed to be a white rag lodged in the fork of a tree. The reason why he had not seen it before was, he was looking down when he passed; and, indeed, a person might have passed it many times without seeing it, for only a very small portion of it was in view, and if seen, any one but Billy Berrege would have thought it not worth while to look a second time. But Billy Berrege, in pursuance of his maxim, "never despise the day of small things," went to work, and after a great deal of difficulty—for he was not a good hand at climbing—he succeeded in getting it down from the tree. It proved to be a small piece from a fine cambric handkerchief, irregular in shape, for it had been in the fire, and must have been drawn through one of the large flues at the Hall. It was deeply stained with blood, and a part of a name remained upon it, although the fire had burned into it.

Mr. Berrege always carried a powerful magnifying glass, which he now brought into use. Although the letters that remained were nearly indistinct, through fire and blood, placed under the glass they disclosed very distinctly eight letters: B-e-l-l-e O-l-d—.

The first thought of Mr. Berrege (who was sometimes disposed to be facetious with himself, though never with other persons,) was that, if read backwards, this would be *Old Belle*; but seriously he thought it must be a piece of the handkerchief of *young Belle*. But how did it come there? At this point maxim No. 4 came to his aid, and he said he would wait and see.

The next day, which was the fourth of his stay at West Cove, no doubt every one on the estate supposed and sincerely wished this everlasting policeman would take himself back home; he could be doing no good there. But Billy Berrege took a different view of the case, and, encouraged by the preceding day's effort, he set out for another day's ramble by himself.

As before, he had spent nearly the whole day, and was returning by the course of the little stream, when he discovered an object caught in the branches of a tree overhanging the water, which proved to be a man's boot, no doubt left there by the high water of a few days before.

Now, Billy Berrege knew that a pair of boots are the hardest things in the world to get rid of in a quiet and unostentatious man-

ner. Clothes may be burned; but it is very difficult to burn a pair of boots without letting some of your friends into the secret, and subjecting yourself to awkward questions as to why you wish to burn them at all. You may bury them deep in the ground; but when the circumstances of a murder are fresh in the minds of every one in the community, you may have somebody besides yourself at the funeral, or at least at the resurrection. And Billy Berrege recalled the case of a murderer who had buried his boots, and Billy Berrege had dug them up six months afterwards. Induced by these circumstances and considerations, after a great deal of trouble he succeeded in getting the boot safely to land. It was deeply stained with something, and being placed under the influence of the powerful glass, showed immediately that these stains were blood.

Some other member of the force might have passed the boot over entirely, and not have taken the trouble to get it to shore in the first place, and have declared, now that it was on shore, "it was nothing but a dirty old boot." But Billy Berrege had been in the habit of examining blood stains in all the shapes they ever take, and he was as

well convinced that these were blood stains as he was of his own existence. So, wrapping up the boot in some paper, (with which he was always supplied,) he returned to his night's rest, well satisfied with that day's work.

Billy Berrege was well aware that it takes two boots to make a pair; so, to the infinite disgust of some and the surprise of all, he stayed around West Cove for two weeks more. Some persons supposed he had taken up his residence there permanently, and began to look upon him as one of the fixtures of the place; but Billy Berrege was not only indifferent to the thoughts of people generally, but he knew what he was about. Fifteen days after finding boot No. 1 he found boot No. 2. He had been patiently waiting for the stream to run down low, keeping a sharp lookout that no one might get ahead of him. And there was the other boot.

The point where he discovered this second boot was much higher up the stream, above the Hall; showing that they had been thrown into the stream probably a mile above the Hall. When he discovered this boot it was under three feet of water, and he had to fish it out. Upon examination, it proved to be

stained in the same manner as the other. There was a stone in it, and a piece of string tied to one of the straps indicated that it had parted company with its fellow in some manner; probably by the force of the current.

There was nothing in the finding of a pair of boots covered with blood, or a piece of handkerchief stained with blood (even though it had a person's name upon it) to make anything like a complete case. So, in pursuance of maxim No. 4—"Keep dark until your case is complete"—Billy Berrege the next day returned to London.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ABDUCTION AND THE PACKAGE.

“ Chance gave a paper to my sight,
Meant for another eye to meet ;
It stated that the coming night
Would render treachery complete.
It told what fiends would scarce proclaim,
Of treason, murder ! and the same
Bore impress of her seal and name.—
With mute dismay I still read on ;
And oh ! the direst that could be,
I found her very honor gone—
She loved another, and not me.”

—*Eliza Cook.*

As if some evil genius was afraid the London police would rust out for want of something to do, a new source of anxiety appeared on the horizon of Billy Berrege's vision ; which last affliction was nothing less than the mysterious disappearance of a very prominent member of society, and member of parliament—no other than the Honorable Dudley Feldkamp. Although it took the police sometime to discover the facts we now lay before our readers, we will not keep

them in the dark as to the manner in which this mysterious disappearance took place.

About three weeks after the return of the honorable gentleman to London he received a dispatch from West Cove, purporting to be from Ralph Oldcroft, urging him to come down immediately, as new developments in the murder case had just come to light.

Taking the first train, the member of parliament arrived at West Cove station a little after dark. He was a little surprised at first that no one was there as usual to receive him, but supposed that the late afflictive circumstances might offer a reasonable excuse. He had not waited more than a minute when a well-dressed, gentlemanly looking individual stepped before him and asked if he was Mr. Feldkamp. On receiving a reply in the affirmative, he stated that new and startling light had been thrown upon the affair of the murder, and that he and another member of the force (naming a man well known in that connection) had come down on that business, and he had come over from the Hall in the family carriage to the station in order to have a conversation with him (the honorable gentleman) while they returned to the house. If he would step into the car-

riage in waiting they would soon be at the Hall, and he would lay before him the whole case as it had presented itself up to this time.

Mr. Feldkamp got into the carriage, his new friend took a seat beside him, and they started rapidly away. In a few moments the new friend, seeming to have forgotten his promise to entertain the honorable member during their passage, jumped out and took a seat with the driver, only saying as he did so, he was afraid the driver was drunk; that he had seen him drinking, and he would not trust him to drive *his* horses any how.

Now, this seemed to Mr. Feldkamp rather thin; in fact, a poor excuse for leaving him and breaking his promise. But he did not have an opportunity to make any objection or put in a disclaimer, as the carriage immediately set off at even a more rapid pace than ever; and it occurred to him there might be some truth in the suggestion of the driver being drunk, for they went at a more rapid gait than he was accustomed to go over that ground.

After going at this rate for some time it occurred to the honorable member of parliament that it took a great while to make the journey to the Hall at their present speed.

Upon looking out, as well as he could ascertain in the darkness, they did not seem to be passing anything that had a familiar appearance; in fact, it seemed to him they were going in the wrong direction—directly away from the Hall. This driver must be drunk indeed, and the other man too.

He tried to open the window but it was fast. He put out his head and tried to attract the attention of the driver, telling him he must have lost his way. Not receiving any response, he halloed and raised his voice until it reached the dimensions of a good sized yell, and worked at the window, exerting all his strength in the vain attempt to get out. He had just succeeded in breaking open the door by main force, breaking off one hinge, when a man entered by that, and at the same time a man entered by the opposite door, each of whom held a pistol to his head, and desired and advised him to subside; which good advice, given in so friendly and gentlemanly a manner, the Hon. Dudley Feldkamp (being a sensible man and member of parliament) acted upon promptly; he subsided. The carriage drove rapidly on, but it is not our intention at this time to follow it.

On the 15th day of November, 1847, Mr. Theopholis Parker, of Gray's Inn, received a package and a letter, brought by some person unknown to the old woman who tended the door. The letter was an anonymous one, and, in fact, about the only letter of that description Mr. Theopholis Parker had ever received; for he was not often the recipient of any confidences communicated in this manner. Being a man of known honor and high standing in the profession of law, he was of course made the repository of many family secrets, and much information with regard to the standing, both social and financial, of many of the inhabitants of London. Much information came to him that did not come to the general public; but this was a case not often having a parallel in his experience, as most communications addressed to him had the name of the writer to guide him in his decision as to the propriety of accepting the responsibility, or (to put it plainly) of running risks which he knew nothing about beforehand; but here was a responsibility he had to accept blindly or not at all.

The letter ran as follows :

"My dear friend: I entrust you with a

responsibility at this time, for doing which my only excuse is that you are the only person in the world whom I consider worthy of this confidence, or that I feel willing to entrust with this matter. I know I am making a request that will, to you, seem singular, and perhaps you will say I am asking too much. I beg of you not to say so; accept the responsibility. I assure you the time will come when you will rejoice that you decided to do so; as by doing so you not only oblige, *greatly* oblige, a friend, one of your best friends, (who I am not at liberty to name at this time,) but you also, in a manner that will appear plain to you in the future, advance the interests of one who has for many years been your client. Indeed, I must say that upon your acceptance of this trust without inquiry depend great interests to be furthered in no other way. I am about to leave London for some time, I know not how long. Keep the package I send you, carefully, with seals unbroken until you have further orders from me. The time will come, sooner or later, when, if I am alive, you will be called upon to open the package, when all will be explained. Till that time, believe you have no truer friend than

THE WRITER."

CHAPTER XVI.

TWO HEADS WANTED.

"Two children, in two neighboring villages,
Playing mad pranks along the healthy leas;
Two strangers meeting at a festival;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall;
Two lives bound fast in one with golden ease;
Two graves grass green beside a gray church tower,
Washed with still rains, and daisy-blossomed;
Two children in one hamlet born and bred—
So runs the round of life from hour to hour."

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

We have now to introduce to our readers another member of the London police force, in the person of Mr. Edward Downing, who is destined to play a conspicuous part in the work of ferreting out the audacious villain who committed the murders of October 11th and 13th.

Ed. Downing may be very properly described as the opposite of his comrade, Billy Berrege, in more ways than one. While Billy Berrege was slow, plodding, patient

and persistent, Ed. Downing was neither slow, plodding, patient nor persistent; but he was a genius in everything he turned his attention to; quick to see through any case brought to his notice, and quick to see through all kinds of people and all kinds of characters, no matter how obscure these characters might be to the ordinary observer. He was quick to find the trail, and quick to run it down, provided it could be run down in that manner; but not persistent in following up an obscure or doubtful trail; not patient in waiting for results that did not appear on the surface. He had risen to his present position on the force from quickness, smartness, promptness and fidelity; and, being blessed with some natural gifts that Billy Berrege did not have at all, they had always worked admirably together.

One of the gifts in which Ed. Downing excelled was assuming disguises and personating the character of some other individual; a thing that Billy Berrege was not only averse to, but incompetent to perform. So these two men worked well together, realizing in the two characters qualities rarely to be found combined in the same person.

On the 5th day of December, 1847, a

crowd was collected on the principal street of the village of Camden. This was sufficient matter of itself to be worthy of mention in this history, for it was a very unusual thing for crowds to congregate in this sleepy little place.

The crowd referred to was examining some bills posted up in various localities, that seemed to contain some matter of absorbing interest.

The fact was this: A man passing one of those bills that morning had discovered an important item that had escaped the observation of other persons passing by. The bills, of which there were a great many posted up, stated that Doctor Bolus could cure every disease, known and unknown, by his newly discovered medicine, (which had a name longer than all the rest of the bill.) There was nothing strange so far, for the country was full of just such bills; and the only wonder was where all the paper came from on which they were printed.

But the man referred to in passing, having, perhaps, sharper eyes than other people, had discovered something near one corner, where one of the tacks was taken out, (for bills in that locality were always fastened

with tacks.) The corner was doubled down sufficient to disclose the word "REWARD," in large letters. As this individual was a man always looking out for a chance, he stopped to see what the reward was for—if it was anything he could do. Upon taking off the outside bill the following announcement met his eye :

£500 REWARD.

The above reward will be paid for any information that will lead to the discovery of the *heads* of the two men murdered on the 11th and 12th of October.

[Signed] HENRY WETHERELI.,
Supt. of Police.

Now, had this announcement appeared, as it ought, by itself, in open daylight, without being hid under other bills, the people of this village would have supposed matters were all right, and have gone to work immediately to find the two heads; but upon every one of the "doctor's" bills being torn down, the above announcement was disclosed immediately beneath.

There was evidently something wrong about this; an attempt to perpetrate a huge joke upon somebody, or else some villainy

that boldly defied investigation. So the police were notified, and Ed. Downing came down from London to throw some light upon the subject.

The same bills, one over the other, were found in several other villages; but nothing had been discovered to show who stuck up the bills. To be sure, at first the case looked rather promising: Ed. Downing discovered, upon his arrival, that a certain person had been seen putting up these bills in broad daylight; and taking an accurate description of the said individual, Ed. Downing traced him, in the course of three days, with much hard work, from one place to another, through several villages and towns, and at length supposed he had run the game to cover; for a person answering to that description exactly was taking his dinner at a tavern in the last town, just at the moment of his arrival. Placing a guard at front and back of the institution, he walked in to interview the "doctor," for such he supposed him to be. Upon going to the dining-room he was told that the man had finished his dinner and gone to his room. "Would they conduct him to the man's room, and please make no alarm about it?" "Yes." He was shown, without loss of time, to the man's room.

The room was vacant. In fact, the man was not in the house, neither then nor thereafter. And the true state of affairs was made apparent upon inquiry of his man who watched the back door if any one had passed out. "No; no one had passed out except the kitchen-maid. Not satisfied with this answer, Ed. Downing, upon pushing his investigations a little further, was convinced that the man he was after had gone out of the back door in the disguise of a *kitchen maid*; and there the trail was lost for good, and a week's work produced nothing. There was a broken link in the chain right at that spot.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE FORGED DRAFT.

“ Last night the tempter came to me and said :
 ‘ Why sorrow any longer for the dead ?
 The wrong is done ; thy tears and groans are naught.
 Forget the past—thy pain but lives in thought.
 Night after night I hear thy cries implore
 An answer : she will answer thee no more.
 Give up thine idle prayer that death may come,
 And thou mayst somewhere find her. Death is dumb
 To those that seek him. Live ; for youth is thine.
 Let not thy rich blood, like neglected wine,
 Grow thin and stale ; but rouse thyself at last,
 And take a man’s revenge upon the past.”

—*Bayard Taylor.*

On the 16th of December, 1847, a stranger presented himself at the banking house of Symonds, Tate & Co., London, and produced a draft to be cashed. This draft was drawn by Wetherell & Weymess, of Liverpool, in favor of Richard Oldcroft, and by him indorsed to Obadiah Slade. Mr. Slade was informed that, as the draft was made payable to his order, they required some one known to the firm to verify the indorsement. “ Was

Mr. Slade acquainted with any one in London?" "Yes; he was acquainted with Ulri Johnson, a salesman in the large clothing house of Studley, Stiles & Co., New Bond street. Messrs. Symonds, Tate & Co. knew that this young man, Ulri Johnson, had been with Messrs. Studley, Stiles & Co. for many years, and he was supposed to occupy the position of confidential clerk in the establishment.

Mr. Ulri Johnson appeared at the bank and stated that he was well acquainted with Mr. Slade; in fact, had sold him a large bill of goods that day. Knew that Mr. Slade was considered a very reliable business man, etc. The sure way would have been to telegraph for information; but the perfect suavity and nonchalance with which Mr. Slade requested them to do this very thing threw the clerk off his guard, and he paid Mr. Slade the amount of the draft, 3,219£.

In a few days, Messrs. Symonds, Tate & Co. received a letter from Messrs. Wetherell & Weymess, saying that they had never issued such a draft. That not only was it a forgery, but the whole execution of the draft was a swindle, as their draft book showed that the corresponding number had been is-

sued in the regular course of business to Messrs. Lawrence & Fisk, commission merchants, Liverpool.

Of course the first step Messrs. Symonds, Tate & Co. took was to call on Messrs. Studley, Stiles & Co. and inquire after the health of their confidential clerk, Ulri Johnson. Messrs. Studley, Stiles & Co. informed them that Mr. Johnson had, only three days before, asked leave of absence, as one of his relatives in the country was very sick. They would telegraph for his immediate return if they wished it. They did wish it, and the dispatch was sent; but Mr. Ulri Johnson did not respond, neither at once nor in the future; he positively declined to be led into any such snare as that.

The police put upon the track of the name of Oldcroft, which at this time was a very popular name, sent a man down to take the deposition of Ralph Oldcroft, at West Cove. Mr. Oldcroft deposed and stated that he was not aware that any of his kindred were living except the daughter who bore his name.

Theophilus Parker, unearthed by the police as knowing something about Richard Oldcroft at some time in his history, testified that he had been well acquainted with a cer-

tain Richard Oldcroft; that he had left London, and that he was not at this time informed of his place of residence or business. Could he produce any of his handwriting? Yes, he could; and did produce several letters. These were submitted to an examination by experts, all of whom found the handwriting on the letters and that on the draft to be identical, except one man, who had discovered, or at least *said* he had discovered, that the letter "L" was not the same in both instances. But this testimony was overborne by the preponderance of testimony going to show that the handwriting was indeed that of Richard Oldcroft, who had obtained the draft in the first instance, or who appeared upon it as the first indorser, thus raising the presumption that he must have gone into the business of manufacturing drafts as a means of livelihood. Therefore he was the man most needed in the absence of Obadiah Slade or Ulri Johnson.

To put it plainly, the supposition was that Mr. Oldcroft had done the manufacturing and Messrs. Slade and Johnson had disposed of the manufactured article. Consequently Richard Oldcroft was the man most needed in this emergency.

Of course Messrs. Studley, Stiles & Co. had a very severe attack of surprise, sorrow and indignation upon discovering that their confidential clerk had left them, and all his brilliant prospects, for a paltry sum of money. But the severity of the attack was much mitigated when subsequent investigation developed the fact that Mr. Ulri Johnson had negotiated their clothing to the amount of £20,000, through the various rag and pawn shops that abound in London; and also by ingenious erasures and alterations on their books had carried off as much more. A very snug little sum to begin life with in some new country, where his talents would be properly appreciated.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BILLY BERREGE TRIES AN EXPERIMENT.

"The fisherman wades in the surges;
The sailor sails over the sea;
The soldier steps bravely to battle;
The woodman lays axe to the tree.

They are each of the breed of the heroes,
The manhood attempered in strife;
Strong hands, that go lightly to labor,
True hearts that take comfort in life.

In each is the seed to replenish
The world with the vigor it needs,—
The center of honest affections,
The impulse to generous deeds.

But the shark drinks the blood of the fisher;
The sailor is dropped in the sea;
The soldier lies cold by his cannon;
The woodman is crushed by his tree."

—Bayard Taylor.

Mr. William Berrege was not only an important member of the metropolitan police force, but was also one of the leading stockholders in an important corporation then existing in London, the name of which was the PEOPLE'S PROTECTION COMPANY. The

profits of this company arose from the manufacture of locks, burglar alarms, and all the various contrivances in use for the purpose of fastening the owner *in* and keeping the thief *out*.

Mr. Berrege had been asked to accept and assume the office of vice president at the formation of the company, when it was a difficult matter indeed to get any one to take hold of it or invest any money in it. Of course it had a kind of fascination to a man of his stamp and his line of business; perhaps he could see more in it than others not versed in such matters. Be that as it may, the scheme had proved a decided success. It was paying well, better, in fact, than the most sanguine had ever supposed was possible, even under favorable auspices.

On the 27th of December, 1847, a man appeared at Mr. Berrege's office, saying he had been requested to call upon him as he had a new patent burglar alarm, and wished to make arrangements with the company of which he was vice president for the manufacture of the article.

He was a very good looking, well dressed, respectable-mannered gentleman; so Mr. Berrege, with his usual off-hand business

air, told the gentleman to proceed with his description, and not take up any more of his time than was necessary, as he happened at this time to be unusually busy.

The gentleman produced the article, fastened it to the jam of the door, explained its various movements, and having gone over the lesson the second time, in order to beat it into the head of the vice president, (who was not as good a hand at mechanics as he was at some other things,) he laid one of the articles on the desk, saying: "Examine it at your leisure; I will call again and see what you conclude about it."

Mr. Berrege being much engrossed with business that day thought no more of the circumstance. But the next day, being reminded of the burglar alarm by meeting Mr. Spitling, the secretary of the company, proposed that he should go with him to the office and examine the article and pronounce on its merits, and decide whether they would take hold and give it a lift into public confidence.

So Mr. Berrege fastened the machine on the door, and taking hold of a short piece of wire attached to it, endeavored to explain to Mr. Spitling the *modus operandi*, but the

thing would not work. He took it off from the door and twisted it this way and that, peered into it, got a nail and poked into it, fastened it up on the door again, and spent several minutes jerking at the wire; got tired of that and took it off again, procured a stick and whittled it into a shape he thought about right for the purpose, and proceeded to poke around the infernal, obstinate machine. All at once (just as Mr. Berrege was remarking "What ails the blasted old institution,") a wheel, situated somewhere in the interior department of the concern, commenced revolving rapidly, and a fine powder, composed of capsicum and some other ingredients, that contained all the filthy smells that nature or art were ever able to produce, flew into the faces and covered the persons of the two officers, and permeated every atom of air in the room. Mr. Berrege, who happened to have his mouth open just at the right time to get the benefit of the dose, ran around the room howling "Fire! water! murder!" And the secretary, digging his fists in his eyes, like a spoiled child, ran screeching around the room, upsetting the clerk who made his appearance from another room, and also all the stools and chairs that came in his way.

When the novelty of the situation had a little worn off, an oculist was sent for to ascertain and report upon the amount of damage sustained. He gave it as his opinion that the sight of the eyes had not been injured; but stated positively that the victims of the disaster would have to be careful and keep in a dark room for some time, and afterwards wear glasses for some time longer.

Mr. Spitling, being a man of a forgiving disposition, was disposed to make the best of the affair, as he was very glad to find he was not killed, which was his impression at first.

Upon parting with his companion in the adventure, he stepped up close to him and in a low whisper said: "See here, Berrege, you keep dark about this thing; do n't let any news of it get out. If you can find that man anywhere, be sure and find him, and set right about it; do n't wait for him to call. I want to make a bargain with him and begin the manufacture of these things as soon as possible, before any one else gets ahead of us."

The only reply the vice-president deigned to make to this suggestion was: "Yes, you may be sure I'll find him; and when I find him I'll make a bargain with him."

CHAPTER XIX.

DOCTOR OLIPHANT.

“ Sit thee down and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl and knee by knee;
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?

Let me screw thee up a peg;
Let me loose thy tongue with wine.
Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest, thine or mine?

Thou shalt not be saved by works;
Thou hast been a sinner, too.
Ruined trunks on withered forks,
Empty scarecrows I and you.

Fill the cup and fill the can;
Have a rouse before the morn.
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.”

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

The circumstances attending the discovery of the bill-posting would of course suggest to the police of London that it might be well to keep an eye out for the multitude of quacks that infest every city.

In pursuance of this idea, Ed. Downing

put on foot a course of most thorough investigations into the characters, habits and antecedents of all of this fraternity, not only in the city, but extending his researches into the country. At this time there was one of the profession, living in the town of Milford, worthy of more than ordinary notice. This individual went by the name of Doctor Oliphant. He used but very few drugs in his practice, depending more upon electricity, various kinds of movements, and poking and pounding his patients into health.

He boarded at the principal hotel of the place, but his office was in a detached building, occupying two rooms on the ground floor, the front room being used as an office, with a few bottles on a single shelf, and very moderate accommodations in the way of chairs, although there was an old horse-hair sofa from which the hair had nearly all departed, and which formed a harder seat than the wooden chairs, as any one who tried it could testify.

There was also an old woman connected with the office, supposed to be his wife, although the gossips of the place said she ought to be his mother; for she was taller than the doctor, and not at all good-looking,

while the doctor was much admired for his good looks, and also his pleasant smile and affable manners, as well as for the effect of his remedies.

The doctor was succeeding admirably, undoubtedly making money, when his career was brought to a sudden close by unforeseen circumstances. He was sitting on the horse-hair sofa one afternoon, and seemed to be in a very good humor, for he held in his hand a bank bill which one of his patients had just left. No one can blame him if visions of future wealth and ease floated before his imagination. His reverie was interrupted by the appearance of an old woman, bent nearly double with rheumatism.

"Be you Doctor Oliphant?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well, I hearn tell on you. I has the rumatiz powerful bad, and I thought as how you could help me; for I hear you cures lots of people in our neighborhood."

The doctor, after making some inquiries with regard to the disease, handed her a bottle of liquid, saying: "This is my *Gastro-Neuralgicon*; rub it in well by a hot fire. It will set you all right."

"Oh! doctor, I have the misery so pow-

erful bad sometimes; and I have a swelling on my breast. I must have you look at that. I do not know what can be the cause of it."

The doctor bent over the old woman to look at the location of the misery. In so doing, of course it was necessary he should lower his head. Suddenly he felt a loop of rope slipping over his shoulders, but he was too quick for the success of the maneuver and jumped back just in time to save himself from a bight of rope pinioning his arms.

"What does this mean, Madam?" asked the doctor in unfeigned surprise.

"It means this," said the old woman, throwing back the folds of her dress and displaying the uniform of the city police, "you are my prisoner;" and producing a pistol, levelled it at the Doctor's head, saying: "I am Ed. Downing, of the city police. I have help near by, and your shortest and easiest way out of this difficulty is to go along with me and say no more about it." And Ed. Downing took a firm grip on the doctor's coat, and tried to move towards the door.

The only notice the doctor took of this (for he seemed to have recovered his usual good nature) was to say with perfect coolness and a wonderfully pleasant smile, "If

you have any more help you had better call it, for you will need it." At the same instant a shrill whistle, that fairly made the windows shake, rang out. The effect of this whistle was two-fold: two men came rushing in from the street, and an old woman made her appearance from the back room, followed by a vicious looking bulldog.

One of the men was met by a discharge from a pistol, and fell forward upon the floor; the other man, although he got the same reception, still advanced into the room, but the dog had him down in an instant, and in a moment more, Ed. Downing, having discharged his pistol into the ceiling, lay on the floor, fast in the grasp of the doctor and the old woman, with his wind shut off more than ever he remembered before in a long and eventful career.

But the noise had aroused others, and feet were heard hastily approaching. At another whistle the three released their holds of their prostrate victims and slid out at the back door, whither Ed. Downing followed as soon as he could get wind enough in his sails for that purpose; but all that he caught sight of was his escapes making good time through an alley.

Here was a nice spectacle in the usually quiet and respectable town of Milford: a man, a woman and a bull-dog scooting through the alleys, the woman with her dress held unusually high, displaying a very good pair of—*men's boots* and a *very dark pair of drawers*; and in the front of the picture was Ed. Downing, of the metropolitan police, standing on the fence with the remnants of an old dress dangling to his official person, while he shouted "Stop, thief!" at the top of his voice.

But there was no stopping that trio. The most diligent search failed to unearth them; they had disappeared from the surface of things as completely as if they had never existed.

The scheme had not failed from any want of talent on the part of the prime mover, but from the same cause that most schemes fail. Ed. Downing had not calculated the amount of resistance to be overcome. The dog had not been counted in at all, for he was kept for special occasions, and no one in the town of Milford remembered having seen him before. The supposed woman was a powerful, good-sized man, and one of the best shots in England.

CHAPTER XX.

THE GOLD PLATE.

"Thy guerdon's sure; look on this ring,
A preclous, though a bauble, thing;
The meanest jewel would suffice
To render safe thy utmost price.
But do my bidding, and the stone
Of richer lustre is thine own.
Behold and judge! the sculptor gazed
Upon the slender hand upraised,
And saw a finger thin and white,
Encircled with a hoop of gold,
Imbedding diamonds of light,
Nor loosely worn nor cheaply sold—"

—*Eliza Cook.*

In the beginning of the year 1848 had any one been watching a certain little old-looking man in England they would have thought there was something very singular in his movements. And some one *was* watching him; and the man watching him was one of the sharpest of the London police, viz: Ed. Downing.

The singular little old man was not at all a disreputable looking man. There was

nothing in his appearance to indicate that he needed watching; he was plainly but neatly dressed always, rain or shine; carried an umbrella done up in a neat manner; wore a very neat pair of gold-plated spectacles; in fact, he was neat throughout. But the singularity of his movements had attracted the attention of Ed. Downing, and wherever the old man went Ed. Downing followed on like his shadow.

There is in London, and indeed in some other towns, a class of shops where everything of a curious and antiquated nature is to be found; anything strange in appearance or dating back to the times of the flood is raked up, taken to these shops and disposed of to the proprietors, who, in their turn, sell these articles at a great profit to any one who takes a fancy to purchase.

This old man might have been seen as regularly as the day came making the round of these shops. It seemed as if he had taken the contract to visit all there was in England, and was going through it systematically; commencing at one side of the city, working steadily and closely, street by street, to the other side, and having got through with London he started out for new researches

in other towns. He seldom purchased anything, and seemed to be oblivious of the fact that he was spotted all the time.

There is nothing to warrant the arrest of a man, no matter how singular his conduct may be, so long as he minds his own business, even if that business is of a singular description. So this singular little old man followed his singular business, and Ed. Downing followed on like his shadow, more persistently than his shadow, however, for he followed him rain or shine, in all kinds of weather, in all kinds of places.

In the town of Brompton there was one of these antiquary shops kept by an old man by the name of Ormandey. At length in the course of his travels the little old man reached this shop, and walking in, asked to be shown through, stating, as he had stated in every other case, that he was buying old armor and dresses for a theatrical company.

It might have been noticed by the shop-keeper, had he been watching, that when the eyes of the little old man fell upon a certain object in his show-case he gave a sudden start, and approached the case with an eagerness he was unable to disguise. This object was a dagger, a peculiar looking, old fash-

ioned article. The little old man inquired: "Where did you get such a thing as that? I never saw such a knife as that before; it must be very old. There cannot be another like it in England." All this was said in a quick, nervous manner.

Mr. Ormandey told the little old man the circumstances attending the purchase of the article; also that he had sold one just like it; these two were probably all the stock to be found in England. The little old man inquired: "Could he tell the name of the man to whom he had sold the other knife?" Mr. Ormandey replied: "No; he had forgotten the man's name, but he could find out, as he remembered the man was from near London and was acquainted with a friend of his."

The little old man expressed a great desire to learn the name of the man who had purchased the other knife. Having inquired the price of the knife he immediately paid for it, and was about to leave, when Mr. Ormandey said: "I have not shown you the most singular thing about the knife. I described the same thing to the other man, as no one would ever suspect this thing if it was not shown to them." Taking the knife he showed him

a certain point in the haft where was a spring; touching the spring, at the same time giving the handle a twist, it came apart at one of the joints, disclosing a beautifully engraved gold plate intended for the name of the owner. The old man left the shop, seeming to be very well satisfied with the result of his purchase.

It might have been noticed that now the old man changed his employment, and leaving the curiosity business, he returned to London, and commencing at one side, street by street, visited every jewelry store, his shadow following him as before. At length the little old man's journey came to an end; this time at No. 487 Regent street.

Here he walked into a jewelry store and made the inquiry that he had made in every other place: "Did any one there remember to have engraved a plate like the one he produced?" This time he met with success. A journeyman, of whom he made the inquiry, told him, "Certainly, he remembered such a plate; would not forget it very soon. He had reason to remember it, from the fact that some time before this he had such a plate brought to him upon which to engrave a name. Having been on a spree, and not

being in good working order, he had defaced the plate, had to procure another plate and engrave it; worked all night and lost a great deal of time, and had the first plate left on his hands." To the inquiry, "Would you sell it?" he replied, "Yes, would be very glad to sell it." The little old man purchased the plate and departed with a very self-satisfied air.

Now, Ed. Downing had noticed the point in the race when the old man left one business and took up the other, and he concluded that his best chance to get any information in the matter was to try the old man that kept the shop at the point where he noticed the change had been made. So he walked into the shop of Mr. Ormandey and announced himself as Ed. Downing, of the city police. Had seen an old man purchase some article, on a certain day, at that shop, and would like to know what that article was.

Now, Englishmen, as a rule, are not fond of having their guardians around when they have no particular call for their services, and Mr. Ormandey was no exception to this rule, so he gave very indefinite and unsatisfactory answers to the questions propounded, and finally, after being badgered by Ed. Downing

for a long time, grew very huffy upon Mr. Downing telling him there was a way to *make* him tell what he knew about the matter. He told Mr. Downing that, in his opinion, there was such a thing as a man minding his own business and letting other people's alone; and there *was* such a thing as a man sticking his nose into other people's business when there was no occasion. So Ed. Downing was compelled to give up all the hopes he had formed upon any information to be obtained from Mr. Ormandey.

As a last resource, he next betook himself to the jewelry store; but here he was foiled in the same manner, the journeyman stating that the little old man had called for the purpose of buying some gold plate—*old* gold plate, he was careful to say—and he had sold him some gold plate. He did not know what the man wanted to do with the plate, and more, he did not care. Did n't think it was any of his business what a customer wished to do with a thing. He sold the article in the regular and legitimate line of his business. Did n't know whether it was any of Mr. Ed. Downing's business or not; supposed he knew his own business. If called upon to give his testimony in court, might

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say more; but certainly had n't any more to say then and there. So Ed. Downing gave up the investigation in that direction, and the little old man disappeared from the surface of society.

CHAPTER XXI.

DIG.

“Every spirit has its mission, say the transcendental crew ;
 ‘This is mine,’ they cry, ‘Eureka ! this the purpose I pursue ;
 For, behold ! a God hath called me, and his service I shall do.

Brother, seek thy calling likewise ; thou wert destined for the same.
 Sloth is sin, and toil is worship, and the soul demands an aim.
 Who neglects the ordination, he shall not escape the blame.

I shall wander o’er the meadows, where the fairest blossoms call ;
 Though the ledges seize and fling me headlong from the rocky wall,
 I shall leave a rainbow hanging o’er the ruins of my fall.”

—*Bayard Taylor.*

On the 17th day of April, 1848, Mr. Wm. Berrege, of the London detective force, received a letter postmarked Castleton, which, upon being opened, disclosed the following rather startling intelligence:

“*Mr. Wm. Berrege:* I have seen your notices offering a reward of 500£ for the two heads of the men murdered on the 11th and 12th of October last. Go to the old hut on the Oldcroft estate at the north-west corner; measure off 116 feet from the corner

runniug north to a large tree, then 23 feet east to another large tree, then 34 feet north, *dig*. You can send the reward directed to Joseph Skylark, No. 837 Audley street."

Now, the first impulse of Mr. Berrege was to cast this missive aside as beneath his notice. He had not offered any reward for the heads, and probably the same party that put up the notices was the author of this production. It could be nothing but a big hoax, and he was not going to be made the laughing stock of the whole force. But the matter troubled him; in fact, he could not rest under it. He somehow felt as if he was the repository of an important secret, which was a burden to him, and it was against one of his cardinal maxims to let anything go by without investigation, no matter how insignificant the thing might seem.

After studying it over several days, he concluded he would run no risk by going down to West Cove alone and satisfying himself whether there was anything concealed under the surface of this tempting offer. So, the next day, disguised so his own wife would not have recognized him, he proceeded to the designated spot.

The "old hut" was well known by that

name. It had formerly been a keeper's lodge, but had fallen into bad repair and out of use for any purpose except as a shelter in a storm, or a temporary retreat for hunting parties. He had no difficulty in making the exploration unmolested, for the old hut was upon a retired part of the estate, and at present it was very seldom any human foot disturbed the solitude.

With a tape line he measured off 116 feet from the corner due north, and there was a large tree, sure enough; then 23 feet east was another large tree, then 34 feet north. Here the surface of the ground presented no unusual features, but with the information already before him, and a searching scrutiny at the right spot, disclosed the fact that the ground had been disturbed, as with the aid of his glass he could discern the outlines on the turf of a hole about eighteen inches square. Placing a stone in the middle of the spot, he returned to his hotel and awaited the darkness of night, when, armed with a spade and a dark lantern, he returned and commenced business.

Upon removing the turf, which he did very carefully, he had no difficulty in following a clearly cut hole into the earth; this hole was

about eighteen inches square. Having gone down about two feet, he came to a box, a very good one made of black walnut, with handles on top by which he had no difficulty in raising it to the surface of the ground. The box had a lid, fastened by a simple hasp, and upon being opened disclosed the long-looked-for treasure. There, sure enough, was a *head*, a very good head, and one that would do to keep, as Mr. Berrege's experience in such matters convinced him the head had been subjected to a chemical process in order to preserve it.

Now, as before stated, Mr. Berrege did not want to get himself into trouble on account of this *head*. He knew it would not do to take the head back with him to London, as it would subject him to unpleasant suspicions and awkward questions. The only safe way to proceed was to commence at the beginning and take the regular course. So, lowering the box to its place, and restoring everything to as good order as he could, he took the midnight train to London.

The next day he appeared before the chief of police, stating that he had received the letter, had said nothing about it before because he thought it was a poor hoax; but he

had concluded it would be best to investigate the matter. Mr. Wetherell agreed with his subordinate in this opinion. So the next day, in *propia persona*, Mr. Berrege, with an assistant, returned to West Cove and proceeded to the old hut, measured off the ground as before, and set his assistant to work at the task of digging, while he stood by with a smile of placid contentment lighting up his weather-beaten features.

Having reached the spot where the box should have been, no box was there. Mr. Berrege took the spade, with as near an exhibition of nervousness as Billy Berrege was capable of, and dug the hole out clean to solid ground. There was no mistaking the evidence of his own eyes—the box had disappeared.

While he stood with a mingled look of awe and disgust, viewing the grave of his blasted hopes, his eye caught the flash of something on the ground near by. He stooped and picked it up; it was a large coat button with the cloth worn away from the metal on one side. As he did not have the *head*, he concluded it would be a good plan to take care of this button, and wrapping it up very carefully he put it in his pocket.

Restoring the dirt to its place, the two returned by first train to London. It was noticed on the journey that Mr. Berrege was unusually silent. If he had unfolded his thoughts they would have been something like this: "Here am I, Billy Berrege, a prominent member of the metropolitan police, in search of a head. I receive a letter telling me to *Dig*. I dig; net result, a button." Nevertheless, he had two of his maxims left to console his wounded spirit, viz: "Never despise the day of small things;" he had the button. "Never under any circumstances be discouraged;" this business was getting very badly mixed, but Billy Berrege had been in badly mixed business before.

CHAPTER XXII.

DOCTOR SWAN.

"Virtue: to be good and just—
Every heart when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust
Mixed with cunning sparks of hell.

Oh we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life,
As the priest above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

Fill the cup and fill the can;
Have a rouse before the morn;
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born."

The fact of the bill posting and the anonymous letters following each other within so short time, suggested the propriety of watching the postoffices. So Ed. Downing, in pursuance of this idea, posted a number of his men at different points. It was rather a hopeless undertaking, on account of the amount of territory to be watched. But, on the 22d of April, Ed. Downing received a dispatch from a small village seventeen miles from London, which said: "Come immedi-

ately; the bird is caged." Upon arriving at this place he ascertained that his man had been for several days watching a suspicious character, a quack doctor who went by the name of Doctor Swan. That the suspicious character had, on the preceding day, mailed a letter; that the detective had walked into the office, and in virtue of his authority demanded the privilege of opening the letter, stating his suspicions; that the letter, upon being opened, furnished no information, as it was written in cipher.

This fact, taken in connection with the preceding circumstances, pointed rather conclusively to this man as being the same individual who had stuck up the notices and afterwards given the information as to the locality where the head was buried. So Ed. Downing proceeded at once to Dr. Swan's residence, and as it was now just the break of day, he would probably be in time, before the doctor was called away on professional business. The doctor's office and residence was one of a long row of tumble-down buildings, owned by some grasping landlord. Having ascertained that there were but two doors, a back and front, to the doctor's domicile, Ed. Downing posted a man at each door,

and himself knocked at the front door, which was soon opened by an old woman of whom he inquired if Dr. Swan was at home. The woman replied "Yes, but he had not got up yet, and she did not think he was awake; had been up late the night before, but she would call the doctor if he wished to see him."

Ed. Downing asked the old woman if the doctor's sleeping apartment was the room directly above the one they were in. The old woman, although a little surprised at the question, replied it was. Mr. Downing, stating that he had important business with the doctor that admitted of no delay, started up the stairway; but the old woman caught hold of him with a grip that was no joke, saying: "No, no! I'll call him; just wait a minute." The ready policeman drew a pistol from beneath his coat, put the muzzle to the woman's head and said: "You see that, and you know what it is. Now you keep perfectly quiet. If you make any noise while I am going up these stairs, I'll shoot you, sure." So saying, he ascended the stairs as silently as possible. When he arrived in the room at the head of the stairs, there, sure enough, was a man asleep in bed.

Ed. Downing walked up to the bed and aroused the sleeper from his morning snooze with the command, "Get up and dress yourself and come with me." The doctor stared at him a moment before he seemed to take in the situation, then said: "What's the matter? Who's sick? Can't you wait and let a feller take another snooze? Been up nearly all night attending to the arduous duties of my profession. I'll be in my grave if—"

Ed. Downing interrupted him with the command repeated in a louder tone: "Get up and dress yourself, and do it quickly! I am Ed. Downing, of the city police."

"Are you? indeed! Who'd a thought it. You do n't look it, not at all."

The only notice Downing took of this ebullition of wonder was to repeat his command, stating he had evidence against him, and he must prepare to go with him immediately. And taking the unfortunate esculapius by the shoulder jerked him up, and the work of dressing commenced in a very deliberate manner.

The doctor had just begun to get into his inexpressibles when he broke out again in a new place with, "Say, my friend, have you got the consumption? you look like it. Now

I knew a man, that looked just like you do, that died of consumption; nothing would save him. I'll tell you what's the matter with you, you work too hard. Take my advice and take things easy."

The only notice taken of this advice was an admonition to hurry up and get those clothes on quickly, or he would take him along without them. But the doctor commenced again: "Now, my dear friend, don't be huffy. I do n't charge anything for the advice, and you may want it sometime."

Another roar from the policeman: "Be lively and get those clothes on, or go without them."

"I say, captain, have you got the itch? The only reason why I ask is, you look as if you had it. I knew a man that looked like you, that died of it. Had he been under my care that could n't have happened. Just take my Compound Extract of Opodeldoc, Hemlock and Tar, and rub it in well. That'll fetch it. It'll make you get around lively at first; but it'll fetch it. I've discovered that, in some complaints, it's necessary to change the character of the disease. That'll change it; yes, (with a most awful wink,) that'll change it. To use a technical phrase, it ameliorates the condition of—"

"You get them clothes on quickly, or I'll ameliorate *your* condition."

At length the process of dressing was gone through with and, Ed. Downing taking a good grip of the doctor, they proceeded to the lower room. Having arrived below, the doctor, looking around in a very sorrowful manner, said: "Where's the old woman? Now, Cap, I can't go without bidding the old woman good-bye," and he commenced yelling "Nancy! Naucy!" and receiving no reply, gave a peculiar whistle which seemed to run up and down through all the notes of the scale.

"Come, come, my man, none of that; come along," and taking the doctor by the collar Ed. Downing began to lead him toward the door, when the doctor stopped in the middle of the room with, "Hold on, my friend, there is my new hat up there on the shelf; now, I never go out in good company without that hat; please hand it down."

This seemed to be a reasonable request, in view of the fact that the doctor had no hat on; so Downing told him to hold his jaw and get his hat. The hat was upon a very high shelf, and the doctor mounted a pair of steps set against the side of the room, his

guardian hanging on to his coat tail, and the doctor saying, "Hold on to me tight, I might fly away." So Ed. Downing did as he was directed, and held on to the coat tail while the doctor mounted the steps to get his hat, singing :

"Hand me down my stove-pipe hat, oh hand it down to me,
For I'm going to an oyster house to dine, and I shan't be back till
half past nine ;

For I'm going away, my Nancy dear,
And I shan't come back, so don't you fear.
I'm going away to fade and die

So hand it down, but don't you cry, oh hand it down to me."

The last notes of this entrancing melody were just issuing from the doctor's mouth when the floor suddenly dropped beneath Ed. Downing's feet; so suddenly that no opportunity was given him to catch at anything, and he went down twenty feet. For a minute he was so stunned that he did not realize the situation. As soon as he recovered a little he began to look around for light, for the darkness seemed to be intense. After a while he discovered a little glimmer, and groping to the spot found it proceeded from the cracks in a door. After pounding and yelling here for two hours, some one in the upper regions was attracted by the noise and released him from durance vile.

He was badly bruised and could hardly

walk, but he proceeded at once to see if he could discover how his birds had flown, through what hole they had made their escape.

His two men posted outside had done their duty by remaining at their posts, as they had received no orders to do otherwise. The three entered the house and made a thorough search. After going from bottom to top, they came to a scuttle in the roof which had afforded an easy mode of escape over the adjacent roofs.

The next step was to interview the owner of the premises. But Ed. Downing received no satisfaction from that quarter. The landlord stated that his tenant had always paid his rent regularly in advance. He did not seem to be impressed with but one idea, and that was that these meddling police had run off his tenant.

The trap door was a simple affair, with hinges that allowed of its dropping—not sinking—and letting the unfortunate victim down with the greatest ease.

The only article that the pair had left in the house that Mr. Downing thought worth while to take away was an old coat that must have belonged to the doctor; and he

concluded he would take that as a means of starting out upon a new investigation. Upon showing this coat to his comrade, Berrege, and comparing it with a button in Berrege's possession, they came to the unanimous conclusion that the coat and button belonged together.

CHAPTER XXIII.

OPERMAN AND MUNDY IN TROUBLE

“ Outlive it—lower yet—be happy ; wherefore should I care.
I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair.
What is that which I should turn to lighting upon days like these ?
Every door is barred with gold, and opens but to golden keys ;
Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets overflow ;
I have but an angry fancy : What is that which I should do ?
I had been content to perish, falling on the foeman’s ground,
When the ranks are rolled in vapor, and the winds are laid with
sound ;
But the jingling of the quinea helps the hurt that honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarling at each other’s heels.”
—*Alfred Tennyson.*

Immediately upon the discovery of the forgery of the draft, active measures were taken by the police to discover the whereabouts of Richard Oldcroft, but to no purpose. That individual seemed to have disappeared from the surface so effectually as to baffle all efforts to unearth him. But Ed. Downing, in this case as in many others, vindicated his claim to be deemed the smartest, quickest and the most original of all the members of the metropolitan police. While

others were bothering their heads about Mr. Richard Oldcroft, he took the idea into his head that it might accidentally turn out that Richard Oldcroft was not the man so much needed after all. At any rate, there was no harm in keeping an eye out, just the same, you know, as if it were some one else.

In pursuance of the train of thought suggested by this idea, Mr. Ed. Downing made a journey to Liverpool and told Messrs. Wetherell & Weymess that he would like to make some inquiries and look about a little. They said they would be glad to afford him any help in their power. To the question put by Downing, "Have you discovered anything unusual in any of your drafts except the forged draft?" they replied, "No, we have noticed nothing unusual, with the exception of one draft which has been delayed an unusual time, but such a thing, though unusual, might occur from various causes without there being anything wrong in the draft."

Ed. Downing inquired what draft they referred to. Could they inform him who purchased the draft, and what were the circumstances attending the purchase of it?

"Yes; the draft was drawn on the 4th day

of November, in favor of Israel Mundy, that individual having purchased the draft in person.

It occurred to Ed. Downing that he did not want a better place than this to start upon his investigation, though he really did not expect much to result from his undertaking. He had just that good an opinion of Israel Mundy, and of Lazarus Operman, to believe them capable of any rascality. He was prepared beforehand to believe anything that might be adduced against these worthies, while he could not recall anything he had ever heard or seen in their favor.

He asked Messrs. Wetherell & Weymess if they could show him from their books the date of the draft, and the party on whom drawn. Yes, they could, and did, showing Ed. Downing from their books that the draft was drawn on Messrs. Roy & Jeffries, of London. So, making a note of the dates and the parties to the draft, Mr. Downing returned to London and asked Messrs. Roy & Jeffries to let him see the cancelled draft. As soon as his eye rested upon this document he made the discovery that the date had been altered from the 4th to the 28th day of November. As it appeared upon the stub

of the draft, and his own eyes had seen it, the 4th of November, here on the cancelled draft the 28th of November.

The perpetrator of this swindle knew that the chances that the date of the cancelled draft would again be brought into question or investigated were very small indeed. If Ed. Downing had not hit upon it in the manner he did, it might have passed muster, and nothing more been known of it than of the man in the moon.

The draft was indorsed by Messrs. Bowles & Crosdale, of Lansing, indicating that Mr. Mundy had used it in liquidating some debt to this firm. Ed. Downing set out immediately for Lansing, and by the exercise of a vast amount of ingenuity, patience and persistence, was finally in possession of these additional facts :

That Mr. Israel Mundy, three days after the day he purchased the draft in Liverpool, was in the town of Lansing; that while there he had met one of the members of the firm, Mr. Bowles, to whom he owed this money, and which he afterwards sent them on the 28th of November; that he even had some conversation with Mr. Bowles on the street; but had said nothing about paying him any

money. To put it plainly, Mr. Israel Mundy had, on the 4th day of November, 1848, purchased a draft at Liverpool, payable to the order of himself; had, three days afterwards, appeared on the streets of Lansing, probably having the draft in his pocket; had seen Mr. Bowles and conversed with him, but said nothing about business; had afterwards, on the 28th day of November, remitted this draft to Messrs. Bowles & Crosdale, altering the date from the 4th to the 28th; and also, as Ed. Downing discovered, must have had a confederate to mail the draft at Liverpool, as he was convinced Israel Mundy was not at that place himself at that time.

The draft had been issued in the regular course of business, and in a regular manner; had been used in the payment of a *bona fide* debt; but it had not been *used* in a regular manner; indeed, it was very *irregular*. For what had the draft been kept in the possession of Israel Mundy for twenty-four days after it was drawn, and the date altered? and altered, too, in such an artistic manner that, standing alone, that fact would never have been discovered; the old date had been taken out and the new one put in in such a manner as to defy detection.

The whole development pointed to one irresistible conclusion: The draft had been kept for the purpose of making a plate identically like it in every respect.

It is not our intention to follow Ed. Downing from this point on the trail he had struck. Suffice it to say that, by watching the back door of the business premises of Lazarus Operman, and putting a strict surveillance over this bunko den both day and night, enough was discovered to warrant a descent upon the back rooms, at the witching, small hours of the night, and Ed. Downing was rewarded for his long and patient labor by capturing sundry forgers' tools, well executed plates, and a great quantity of such trash, enough to convince the jury at the trial which followed that these things, taken in connection with other circumstances there and then set forth at great length by learned counsel, entitled Mr. Lazarus Operman and his accomplished clerk to the privilege of spending the rest of their days in penal servitude, and it was so ordered and entered on record, and the parties remanded to jail.

CHAPTER XXIV.

KNIFE AND LETTER.

"I know some minions round me then
Were more of demons than of men.
Their aim was sure if life the mark,
Once set on blood, they'd keep the track,
And would not scruple in the dark
To sheathe their dagger in my back."

—*Eliza Cook.*

I've tracked you through the forest,
I've trailed you o'er the stream;
While rustling through the everglade,
Your glistening bayonets gleam.

On the 14th day of May, 1848, and very early in the morning, a crowd had assembled on Audley street, London. It was very early in the day for such a crowd, and they all seemed to be looking up anxiously at some object on the side of a high building. It was a difficult matter for persons in the street to determine what the object really was; but it seemed to be a piece of red cloth with white letters printed or painted on it,

and held in its place by a large knife thrust through the cloth into the wall.

Part of the letters were large enough to be read from the street, and ran thus: THIS IS THE KNIFE THAT KILLED COCK ROBIN. The other letters being small could not be read at that distance. The place where this important information was posted up was the top of a blank wall, eighty feet from the ground, without a window near it, so it seemed a miracle how it ever got there, and a difficult problem to solve how it was to be taken down. It was not near enough to the top to be reached by any means except the ordinary method of working upon the surface of such walls by hanging ropes.

The crowd was still gazing and proposing different plans when a young man wearing the garb of a sailor elbowed his way through to the point where, from the appearance of the parties engaged in discussion, the most brains, money and influence was to be found, and said briskly:

"Sure, now, and if you want that thing down here's the man for your money. I'll get it down immediately and cheap, too."

"How much?" shouted the crowd.

"I'll do it for a pund, now. Just hand it

over and you shan'u have to wait five minutes."

The pound was immediately made up by the crowd and handed to the sailor.

"Has any of you a bit of string, now, and at it I go."

Some string was handed to him and he disappeared through an alley. The last of that pound, suggested some one in the crowd.

No, no, says another; he's an honest chap, I know from the cut of his jib.

In a moment the young sailor appeared upon the roof over the point where hung the red rag, and making a running noose to the string lowered it, and after fishing for a minute succeeded in catching the knife around the haft and drawing knife and cloth together to the top of the building. A loud shout greeted this exploit. The crowd supposed the young sailor would now disappear and bring the articles down by the same course he took in going up, but they were mistaken. Pulling a long cord from his pocket he attached it to the knife and commenced letting it down the side of the wall, while the crowd roared "Throw down that rag; let her come, now, she won't break! What are you holding on to it for? Don't be afraid, bub, drop it.

Paying no attention to anything but the business in hand, he lowered the knife within ten feet of the ground, so that every one could have a fair view of it. A voice in the crowd yelled out: "That's the very knife that did the murder last October!" "Yes," said another, "the very thing! I never saw another like it in my life; but when I saw it down at that place where the murder was done, it did n't have any blade, and now it has; that's what gets me. Let it come down, you idiot! What do you hold on to it for?"

A policeman appeared suddenly with a long pole, and made a swoop for the purpose of catching the string above the knife; but it was drawn up out of reach instantly, and continued to ascend rapidly until the sailor again had possession of it, then he bowed to the crowd, rolled up the piece of red cloth and threw it down, and making another bow disappeared.

The crowd waited for the knife to come, but it did n't come; in fact, it never came at all. Nothing more was seen of the knife or sailor, then or thereafter.

Upon getting the red rag near enough to read the small letters, the information imparted was this: "THIS IS THE KNIFE THAT

KILLED COCK ROBIN. *I have got the mate to it with a broken blade. Any one can have it who will leave 50£ with Mrs. Jane Fisher, No. 743 Baker street.* This was all; and the police said, "Some stupid joke," and walked off.

But there were several persons there who had seen the handle of the knife before it was stolen, at the time of the inquest at West Cove, who looked serious and said: "There is something about this that is no joke, anyhow." These persons took the trouble to explain to Billy Berrege, who had not seen the knife before it was stolen, how striking was the resemblance. But Billy Berrege, as usual, if he had an opinion, kept it to himself.

But two days had passed after this little episode of the knife, when Billy Berrege received through the post the following laconic epistle:

"Mr. William Berrege: I have in my possession the knife you saw hanging, a few days ago, by the side of a certain building on Audley street. And, what is of more importance to you, I have in my possession positive information of the manner in which the murders were committed on the 11th and

12th of October last; also of the person who committed the act.

"I will put you in possession of the knife and the information upon these terms: 200£, to be paid in the following manner: You shall pick and send your man to the place I shall name, with the money; I will send my man to the same place with the knife and a letter containing certain information; each man to carry a navy seven-shooter, and no other person to be present or within the place I name, which is the cellar owned by George Widger, No. 654 Sloane street, on the south side of the wall that divides the cellar; the time shall be three o'clock in the afternoon of May 23d.

"Upon payment of the money you shall receive the knife and the information. *I mean business*, and take the liberty to remind you that the least attempt at arrest before the delivery of the articles defeats the whole business; the least attempt at arrest after the delivery of the articles will result in but one way: your man will be killed, and we will keep the money, the information and the knife. You know your own business, I know mine; you perform your part of the contract, I will perform mine."

Now, when Mr. Berrege read this communication he at once came to certain conclusions concerning it. There was no doubt it was a more business-like document than the others he had received. The word *we* used in it might indicate an organized band of villains, or it might have been used simply for effect. As to the threat contained in it, that was simply bosh.

He would teach this aspiring individual that he could not defy the metropolitan police with impunity; he would turn the tables and put it just the reverse of the way it was put in the letter: he would keep the money, the information, and the knife, and also the man this daring villain sent to deliver the articles.

But how was this to be done? His experience had taught him that men of this class, when they meant business, were not to be trifled with. To put it plainly, he had the utmost confidence that this man would endeavor to keep his promise, especially that part of it that referred to killing his man in case of any attempt at an arrest.

He went and examined the cellar referred to. It was a very deep cellar, having a wall running through the middle, not all the way, but nearly to the front, so as indeed to divide

it into two cellars with one entrance. He called upon the owner of the property whose place of business was directly over the cellar, and after stating the circumstances, asked him if he could imagine any reason why his cellar was chosen for such a meeting? And the man told him in a very huffy kind of a way that he knew nothing about it; didn't like to have anybody fooling about his cellar anyhow.

Mr. Berrege told him that he had determined to accept the man's proposition, and he would not have any interference at the time named; that was all. Mr. Berrege told him nothing more, and he made his preparations in his usual silent and methodical manner. With the help of two men he examined the cellar thoroughly from end to end, turned over and opened every empty box and barrel he could find; spent a long time in making the most thorough search, and being convinced there were but two entrances, a front and a back entrance, he laid his plans as follows:

He knew that what he did to arrest the party must be done after paying over the money, and he wished to withdraw his own man after the delivery of the articles as soon as possible, then arrest the other man.

With these two objects in view he guarded the front and back entrances, and also ordered two of his own men to take their positions just inside the front entrance of the cellar after the parties who were to make the transfer had gone in. There was a pile of boxes and barrels running back directly from the front, so that after the men had entered and gone to the spot designated they were out of sight of the front entrance.

Punctually at the time the men made their appearance. The man who acted as envoy for the enemy was as fine a specimen of physical development as anything even the metropolitan police could produce. Passing around to the south side of the wall, without a word being said, each man drew a formidable pistol. One man counted out 200£ good and lawful money, the other man examined it, counted it over to see if it was correct, immediately handed over the knife and letter, and the instant he had done so stepped off hurriedly and swiftly (almost in a run) past the other man towards the front entrance.

Now this was not on the programme as Mr. Berrege had laid it down and explained it to his men. This man, instead of stopping to pass the compliments of the season with

the other man, and to ask him if he wasn't glad this business was over with anyhow, had stepped away in such a hurry as to leave his comrade away behind. As a consequence Mr. Berrege's man thought he might as well remain where he was for the present. Just as the retiring man turned into the alley formed by the boxes he was met by two men with pistols presented and the single word "surrender!" But the words had but left their lips when there were two simultaneous reports coming from the north side of the cellar, and the two men dropped, one discharging his pistol, but in such a manner as to make no impression upon anything but the pile of boxes. The man who had just received the money turned, and resting his hand on the corner of a box, taking careful and deliberate aim at the man standing on the south side of the wall, (from whom he had but an instant before received the money,) shot him dead. Rushing to his side he snatched the knife and letter, and coming back on the north side of the cellar was just in time to exchange shots with another man coming in and then disappear.

In a few moments the cellar was full of people, attracted by the noise, and a thorough

search was made, but nothing was discovered but the bodies of the three men, two of them badly wounded, and the third one (the man who had acted as envoy and paid over the money) was dead. No satisfactory explanation could be given of these extraordinary circumstances, for the wounded men averred that eight or ten shots were fired from the north side of the cellar, by whom they could not tell. What had become of the men who fired those shots and the man who received the money ?

Mr. Berrege had to console himself with this reflection, that he had found one man who kept his word literally. His business friend had done as he said he would, he had taken the money, the knife, the information, and the life of the man.

CHAPTER XXV.

BILLY BERREGE TRIES ANOTHER EXPERIMENT.

"She leagued with traitors! 'Twas no dream,
I'd proof of all that hellish scheme;
I'd noticed much of late to make
The drowsiest suspicion wake:
Strange glances interchanged by those
I guessed were less of friends than foes;
And, more than once, I'd plainly heard
A whispered treasonable word.
But these I brooked and thought to quell
All petty brawls that might betide,
Till I beheld the Hecate spell
Was conjured by my trusted bride."

—*Eliza Cook.*

Mr. Berrege, being an important member of the metropolitan police, was in continual receipt of letters of a doubtful character, some being anonymous and some worse than nameless. He generally gave these missives but little attention; but on the 3d of June, 1848, he received a communication of the aforesaid nature that he could not dismiss in the usual summary manner. In fact, it troubled him; and when a thing troubled

him, and persisted in troubling him, his experience of his own temperament had taught him that he had to get rid of it in some way. The communication was as follows :

"*Mr. Berrege:* As I know you are after the person who committed the Oldcroft murder, I write to put you on the right track; you mind what I say. The young lady, Isabella Oldcroft, is the one to put you on the right track; she knows about it, for she was seen near the spot about the time the man was murdered, and left carrying a bundle.

Yours truly, ISAAC KEENE."

Now, Mr. Berrege knew, or thought he knew, that the name signed to this epistle was a false name, and so there would be no use in pursuing the investigation with the intention of ferreting out Mr. Keene to find out what he knew about the matter; but he had been debating for some time in his own mind the propriety of doing just what Mr. Keene told him to do; that is, apply to Isabella Oldcroft to find out what she *did know* in reference to the matter.

Mr. Berrege was generally unscrupulous in obtaining information that he considered necessary to make out his case; but he was very averse to having anything to do with

women, or being brought in collision with them in the course of his business, which was not a pleasant business at the best. It might have been noticed by any one acquainted with this peculiarity of the worthy policeman that the first inquiry he made in reference to any case was directed to find out whether there was a woman in the case. This feeling arose, not from any contempt for, or dislike to, the sex, but really through his regard for the sex and his dislike to give them pain, and be brought in a position where he would be compelled to yield the promptings of duty and self-interest to this weakness. But this letter brought his indecision to a head; he decided he would endeavor to bring about an interview with the young lady. So, after a great deal of hard work (for he was not good at writing letters to ladies) he produced the following effusion :

“OFFICE OF METROPOLITAN POLICE,
HEAD STATION.

Miss Isabella Oldcroft :

*Dear Madam :—*As circumstances have led me to believe you are in possession of information that might lead to the detection of the person who committed the murder on the 11th of October last, and, as I have been credibly

informed, you were seen near the spot soon after the deed was done, I have concluded it is my duty to see you and obtain any information you can give me. My duty as an officer requires me to obtain information of this character in the most direct manner possible, and your duty requires you to give such information.

"Influenced by these considerations, I have to propose an interview, strictly private and confidential, at Cozzen's Hotel in this city, assuring you that no one but ourselves need know anything of this meeting. If you accept, I will come there disguised and under the assumed name of Robert Bowles.

"I have felt a great delicacy in approaching this subject with you, and you may be sure of my utmost consideration for your feelings, and you need have no fears as regards yourself; my only object is to confirm my suspicions, which already lead me in a certain direction.

"Allow me to say, however, that if you refuse to grant my request for the interview now, I may follow you still, which I do not wish to do; for I do not wish to give you any unnecessary trouble in the matter. And further, as an old hand in this business, per-

mit me to say that your best plan is to see me now, for this reason: Assuming, for the sake of argument, that you stand in the position of a person who has been the unwilling spectator of a crime, you of course are entirely blameless yourself, but you can be brought before a court of law to tell what you do know; therefore, your best plan is to see me now. Yours truly,

WM. BERREGE."

When Miss Isabella received this epistle it was like a thunder-clap out of a clear sky. We are not going to attempt to give a synopsis of her feelings, but simply to state the fact that she accepted the proposal for the interview, which indeed was the wisest thing to do; as, in all probability, Mr. Berrege would follow her and make more trouble if she did not. So she wrote her reply, stating she would be at Cozzen's Hotel at the time designated.

On the day set for the interview, having taken a room in the fifth story of the building, so as to be as far as possible away from any risk of disturbance, she awaited the coming of her tormentor.

Prompt to the time came Mr. Berrege, (he was always prompt), and being shown up

to the young lady's room, he entered with a feeling of triumph; but the sight that met his eyes took all that out of him immediately. He had not seen this young lady since the time that he first went to West Cove upon his investigations, soon after the murder. At that time he had thought her a very handsome, lovable, though distressed, girl, and he was not prepared for the change that many days and weeks spent in constant distress had wrought.

So he was confronted immediately by an element in his problem unprovided for, and that put him entirely at fault; in fact, he was never so taken at a disadvantage in his life. He had been prepared, before he came into the room, to ask several questions, but now he did not see how he could ask them, or if he did, how he could use any means to elicit replies, in case those given did not suit his purpose.

Acting on the principle that a disagreeable business is best gotten over as soon as possible, after looking at his victim for an instant with an expression seeming to indicate that he would rather take her on his lap and rock her to sleep than to go on with this busi-

ness, he plunged in, as he was aware, totally unprepared :

"My dear young lady, I am old enough to be your father, and I assure you in this case I feel for you. I have no desire to hurt your feelings any more than can be helped, and if you will give me your confidence I will make things as smooth and easy as you can imagine; but there must be some confidence on your part, and you must give me as direct replies to the questions I shall ask as possible."

There being no answer to this proposal of confidence but the sobbing of the distressed girl, he proceeded to the first question:

"Were you near the spot immediately after the murder on the evening of October 11th?"

"I was."

"Were you present when the murder was committed?"

"I was not."

"Were you aware of the murder before the alarm was given?"

"I was."

"Were you near the body, so near as to tell what body it was?"

"When I saw the body it was mutilated so you know no one could tell."

"Did you not have a suspicion of whose body it was?"

"Please don't ask me anything about it; please don't; you will kill me;" and the young girl came and knelt down before the old man, her eyes streaming with tears, stretching out her hands, and beseeching him, her voice broken by sobs; "please don't; please have a little pity on me. Haven't you a daughter of your own? Can't you feel for me? Can you think of nothing but this murder while you are killing me?"

Now Mr. Berrege had a daughter of his own, and she was his idol; and when this young lady suggested this fact to him she touched him in a tender place, and took him at a disadvantage. No promptings of duty or consideration of what he owed to society or his profession could prevent the father's feelings of pity, which had been aroused, from having their legitimate effect. He was attacked in his weak point; he could never get along with these women, anyway.

"Well, well, my dear young lady, I have only two or three more questions that I will ask you. They are not all I had intended to ask, but I do not want to distress you more than is necessary. Now tell me this: Do

you know who committed this murder?" The question was artfully put, but it failed.

"I do not *know* who committed the murder."

"But you *suspicion* some one?"

No reply.

"Now tell me, won't you, whom do you *suspicion*?"

"I will not tell—*never*! NEVER!! NEVER!!! Please have mercy upon me; don't torment me any more."

"Well, now, my very dear young lady, I have only one more question to ask, and I want as direct an answer as you can give. Please, for an instant, look at this matter from my side of the question. I am obliged to go through with a great deal of disagreeable business that I would rather leave out or have nothing to do with, but I have no choice." And so Mr. Berrege went on talking for a few moments, trying to soothe and allay the feelings of his victim as a preparation for the last question—the most important—that he had purposely kept till the last.

"Now, my dear young lady, answer me this—(taking out from his pocket the piece of burnt handkerchief, and explaining to her where and how he had found it, he purposely

kept the part of a name concealed)—please explain to me about this piece of handkerchief. It must have been drawn through the draught of some chimney; and see these letters on it." So saying, he held the handkerchief so his victim could read these letters: "B-e-l-l-e O-l-d—." But the effect was something more than Mr. Berrege had supposed possible.

The young lady gazed at the letters for an instant, then slid from the chair to the floor, or rather into the arms of Mr. Berrege, who laid her on a sofa near by and procured some water from a pitcher in the room and used it freely about her face, seemingly without any effect; then, really alarmed, he rang the bell violently and ordered spirits, and to be quick.

By the time the brandy got there the poor girl was coming out of the faint, and Mr. Berrege, heartily cursing his luck, determined not only to get out of this affair but to get out of it as soon and in as good order as possible. Therefore when the young lady, with a gasp and a cry, came to consciousness again she found the head member of the metropolitan police attempting to administer a teaspoonful of brandy, and saying with

great earnestness: "Never mind, my dear, never mind; we're all through now; you shan't be bothered with another question, not one."

Reassured by these words, and by the kind manners of Mr. Berrege, the poor girl threw her arms around the old man's shoulders as he knelt by the side of the sofa (what a sight this would have been had some one happened in just then,) and said: "Please promise me another thing, now; please promise me that you will drop this matter; that you will keep still about what you do know; let the others work on the case if they will; but you, I confide in you, and you've got a daughter of your own. I'm in dreadful distress; I can't tell you any more; but promise me you'll drop it and not do anything more, won't you?"

But Mr. Berrege was not so far gone as that; he only said: "My dear young lady, you shall not be troubled any more, you may depend upon it. My sense of duty and of what I owe to society will not allow me to go any farther; but you may depend upon my word, no one shall trouble you about it any more."

A few moments after this an old man

might have been seen going through the halls and down the stairs of Cozzen's Hotel, looking much weaker, much more humble than when he had ascended, two hours before.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE UNDERGROUND BROTHERHOOD.

"I had a vision when the night was late :
A youth came riding toward a palace gate ;
He rode a horse with wings that would have flown,
But that his heavy rider kept him down ;
And from the palace came a child of sin
And took him by the curls and led him in,
Where sat a company with heated eyes,
Expecting when a fountain should arise,
A sleepy light upon their brows and lips."

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

At the period through which our story runs there existed in the city of London one of the most complete organizations for the perpetration of crime in the world. This organization was composed, not of low, abandoned villains and outcasts of society, but it numbered in its membership some who were supposed to be the rich, influential and respectable members of society. They had a constitution and by-laws, and the most rigid rules with regard to the admission of members, and their conduct after admission. Once

admitted, there was no discharge except by the final discharge—death.

If a member was supposed to have divulged anything, he disappeared and left no trace behind. The least suspicion led to immediate trial by their courts, and from their verdict there was no appeal.

They controlled some of the best mechanical talent in the metropolis, and numbered in their ranks some of the finest engravers and artists; indeed, there was hardly a profession, calling or trade that was not represented among them, and they were able, for many years, to set the police at defiance. The name by which the band was known among themselves, and as it appeared on the records, was "THE BANDED CRAFTSMEN."

The leader of the band was Luke Cavendish, the most skillful burglar and the most daring rogue known to the police of London. Of giant frame and herculean strength, he was a terror to every one upon whom he chose to make a descent.

This man Cavendish had for years been puzzling his brains over one problem, that was, how to construct some point or points where they could be perfectly secure and beyond the reach of the police. He had first

thought of constructing a large room, a long distance under ground, but the plan had this disadvantage on the face of it: The expense would be too great for a room that might have to be abandoned with its contents. He had then conceived the idea of building a number of these rooms in different localities, of small sizes, and having decided upon this plan he went to work, forming a most extensive system of hiding places for plunder. The plan pursued was this:

Selecting localities under buildings owned by members of the league, the first thing done was to make an excavation about three feet square, extending down deep into the earth, the dirt from the excavation being carried away in small quantities by members of the gang. After arriving below the drainage level of the city, all that was necessary to be done was to wall up with brick, laying upon that a heavy coat of cement, and inside of this wall so formed were iron plates firmly riveted together, thus forming a passage impervious to water.

Down this passage ran a narrow stairway. Having arrived as far beneath the surface as was thought best, a room 10 x 12 feet was constructed in the same manner as the pas-

sage, with a solid wall and iron plates, thus forming a room so far below the surface as to be secure from intrusion, having but one entrance, and that under the control of the most desperate villains the world has ever seen. This entrance was guarded constantly, not only by the proprietor of the building above, personally interested in keeping his dangerous secret, but controlled also by a system of signs and ciphers, which, while the initiated could read on the run, the uninitiated could not read by the most diligent study.

Here was a safe place for all kinds of valuables, such as jewels, money, plate, silks, and even valuable papers were sometimes carried there, and negotiations opened and carried through for their return to the owner.

Here the Banded Craftsmen had their own printing presses, every tool known to the professional cracksman, plates, dies, stamps and engraving tools. Some of the rooms were devoted to the business of not only forging but making drafts and bank bills entire.

Thus were they enabled to laugh at detectives, and gather their spoils from under the noses of the local police.

A murder committed by a member of this gang was almost beyond the possibility of detection. To this ancient and honorable order belonged our revered and respected friends, Lazarus Operman and Israel Mundy, and it was their connection with the association that finally blew it to pieces.

About two weeks before the time that Mr. Berrege had the interview with the young lady at Cozzen's Hotel, there had been a robbery of one of the large banks, and also two of the most extensive jewelry stores in the city, both on the same night. The amount carried off by the burglars amounted to half a million pounds sterling.

We do not introduce this fact here for the purpose of going into the details of the burglary, or the means by which this wonderful and astounding piece of villainy was accomplished, but simply for the purpose of bringing to the notice of the reader, in this connection, the fact that it was discovered beyond the possibility of a doubt that the moving spirit, the instigator and chief actor in this triumph of the cracksman's art, was no other than Luke Cavendish, the leader and president of the Banded Craftsmen.

As usual a large reward was offered for

his apprehension, but it was known in offering the reward there was no danger of anybody claiming it. There was always a reward on this man's head, but it had come to be the settled belief that he could not be arrested. Every few days he would be seen by some one in London for a few minutes at a time, then suddenly disappearing, no one knew whither. His coming and going were as mysterious as if he had dropped out of the clouds and returned to them again.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE RESCUE.

"Fire is good, but it must serve ;
 Keep it thrall'd—for if it swerve
 Into freedom's open path,
 What shall check it's maniac wrath ?
 Where's the tongue that can proclaim
 The fearful work of curbless flame ?
 Darting wide and shooting high
 It lends a horror to the sky ;
 It rushes on to waste, to scare,
 Arousing terror and despair ;
 It tells the utmost earth can know
 About the demon scenes below ;
 And sinks at last all spent and dead,
 Among the ashes it has spread."

—*Eliza Cook.*

Between one and two o'clock in the morning following the day that Mr. Berrege had his memorable interview with the young lady at Cozzen's Hotel, fire was discovered issuing from the windows in the lower story of that magnificent building. By the time the fire companies were ready for work it was evident the building was doomed, the fire

having in some manner got possession of the entire basement before any alarm was given, and worked its way through the first and second stories before any water was put on it.

Most of the efforts of the firemen were directed toward hoisting ladders to the windows, and awaking and rescuing the sleepers from their perilous position. So rapid was the progress of the flames that the heat soon became almost unendurable at the windows where the brave men were periling their lives to rescue the occupants. Several rope ladders were burned off and all the persons on them precipitated to the street below, some severely injured. But the men still worked on, and the flames rose higher and leaped more fiercely until they poured from every window in four stories of the building, and were rapidly making their way to the fifth story.

The work of saving anything from the burning pile had to be abandoned, for no one could live in the fierce heat.

On one side of the building, not accessible by windows, was a blank wall rising at one place to a height of one hundred feet. Here had there been any means of reaching the top of the building in order to let down a

rope ladder all would have been right; but there was nothing as a point to fasten to, and it was useless to throw anything to that dizzy height with the hope of catching it to the roof.

It was hoped by those who had been watching the rescue of persons from the building that the work was complete, that all had escaped, for no one had been seen for a few moments, although every one was watching the windows in the fifth story very intently, with vague doubts of what might be yet to come.

Suddenly there was a cry of horror from the immense assemblage. Mr. Berrege, of the metropolitan police, being on duty, doing all in his power to look after property strewn around and keeping an eye on suspicious parties, attracted by this cry, came to the front to ascertain what new aspect the case had assumed. Casting his eye up to the room, memorable to him as the place where he had a few hours before bathed a young lady's head and administered brandy. What was his astonishment and dismay to see two ladies at the window stretching out their hands imploring help and deliverance from their perilous position.

Yes, there could be no mistake about it, one of those ladies was Isabella Oldcroft. Mr. Berrege felt something nearest like a sickening sensation that men of his profession and steady nerve ever feel. His eye took in and his brain comprehended the situation immediately. Up those five stories, one hundred feet from the pavement below, all possible access cut off, the fierce flames almost licking the spot on which they stood, were two human beings; one of them a person in whom he had got to feel a peculiarly strong interest.

In an instant his voice was heard ringing out in steady tones: "I will give 500£ to the man or men that rescue those ladies; who'll give more?" "I'll make it a thousand," was instantly heard. "I'll make it two thousand," came from another. "Billy Berrege, you might as well make it a million," said a voice in the crowd, "no one can do it; it's simply impossible." But it was not impossible to pledge the money; and in a shorter time than it takes to tell it 5000£ was pledged by substantial men as an inducement for other men to risk their lives in doing what was impossible from the nature of the case to accomplish. All access was

cut off except by the blank wall one hundred feet high.

Efforts were made to drive spikes and carry up a ladder, but it was evident the building would burn down before this could be accomplished. In the meantime the excitement in that crowd beggars description; some wrung their hands and cried, some cursed; some brave fellows went up the front of the building, catching by the windows and burnt pieces of wood, until scorched, they fell to the ground and were dragged away by their comrades.

Mr. Berrege having done all he could was standing watching the advancing flames, the sweat streaming from his face, every nerve strung to its highest tension, yet unable to do anything; compelled to stand and see these ladies roasted before his eyes, so it seemed.

Suddenly another cry—this time kept up until it seemed the city would rock to its foundation. Two men appeared upon the roof directly over the window where the ladies stood. Again Mr. Berrege stood gazing upon these two men as if the angel of the bottomless pit had come to the rescue. There was no mistaking these two men;

one was the giant form of Luke Cavendish, leader of all the villains in England, the other was the same young sailor, wearing the same identical suit, who shook the knife in his face from the walls of a certain building a few days before.

How they came there no one knew or cared; the fact that they *were there* was guarantee of a rescue, and that was enough.

Unwinding a piece of rope from his body Luke Cavendish instantly made it into a ladder reaching down to the sill of the window below, (twenty-five feet,) then fastening one end in the roof, while the sailor took his position directly over the window leaning over and holding on to the rope. The giant form was seen to come down to the sill of the window and swing into the room. A minute passed in consultation and he appeared again, carrying a lady on his arm as most men would carry an infant. He ascends to the roof, the other man catching the lady from his grasp as soon as within reach. Again he descends, and the feat is repeated.

A breathless silence had been maintained while this was going on, but when the second lady reached the roof the cry broke out afresh: "Bravely, bravely done; you're the

man for my money; I'll bet on you;" and every form in which a crowd always expresses its satisfaction on such occasions.

Skirting around the edge of the burning building Luke Cavendish led the two ladies until he came to the dead wall, here he stopped. A large portion of the roof had fallen in, and flames were rolling over the heads of these four persons standing there over one hundred feet from the ground, at the top of a blank wall which was the only thing that protected them from the flames.

Luke Cavendish drew a string from his pocket and lowered it; a rope ladder was fastened to it and drawn up immediately. The instant the ladder was made fast two firemen commenced ascending, but the voice of the giant was heard in loud, angry tones: "Get off there or I'll throw the whole thing down." They knew the man well enough to know he would do as he said, so they drew off immediately.

The giant stepped to the edge of the roof in plain sight of the crowd that had again become silent as death. Taking a large knife from the hands of the sailor he felt along the edge of the blade, looked at the crowd, and stuck it in his belt on the right

side; then taking a large pistol from the same hands he examined the lock, sighted along the barrel, and stuck that also by the side of the knife. Then taking a lady on his left arm as if she had been a doll he commenced the descent. Down he came—down—down—down—using his right hand to catch the rounds of the ladder, until near enough to the ground a fireman took his burden and he started up again. But a fool-hardy man started up the ladder after him. Several persons cried "Come back." The giant stopped, drew his pistol on the man, and said: "Do you want to die now, my man? Or would you rather live a while longer? Take your choice; if you stay there I'll shoot you. And more, the man that touches this ladder again while it hangs here, I'll shoot him without warning." Luke Cavendish was not interfered with any more in his truly noble work. He ascended and descended, bringing the other lady; ascended again, threw off the ladder, and both men stepped to the front while an uncontrollable cheer rang out; they bowed a graceful adieu and disappeared.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OPERMAN DIVULGES.—THE BROTHERHOOD
COLLAPSE.

"The whirling blast, the breakers dash
The snapping ropes the parting crash
The sweeping waves that boil and lash
The stunning peal the hissing flash;
The jarring clash that wakes the land,
When, blade to blade and hand to hand,
Unnumbered voices burst and swell
In one unceasing war-whoop yell;
The trump of discord ringing out,
The clamour strife the victor shout;—
Oh, these are noises any ear
Will dread to meet and quail to hear."

—*Eliza Cook.*

Lazarus Operman, while confined in jail, had abundant opportunity to review his misdeeds and take a look forward into the future. The view of the future was not inspiring; in fact, to a man of his active business habits the prospect of being torn from all his pursuits, associations and surroundings for the rest of his life was decidedly disheartening.

He set himself to think. Was there not some way out of this difficulty? It occurred to him, finally, he might use his knowledge acquired from being a member of the underground brotherhood to advantage if he could make up his mind to blow on the gang.

Having looked at the matter in all its aspects, and weighed the arguments for and against such a course, he concluded he would do it, taking good care to protect himself in the negotiations that he proposed to open with the police.

So Henry Wetherell, superintendent of police, received a note by a trusty hand, saying that the prisoner, Lazarus Operman, wished to see him on important business; and he responded to the request as soon as possible.

Mr. Operman informed the superintendent that he had in his possession information involving millions of property; implicating some very responsible men (so considered) in the city; and, in fact, controlling the key to the whole system of underground villainy that then existed throughout the metropolis. That if the conditions he should name were complied with, he would put the police force of London in control of the most gigantic

system of plunder then existing in the world.

To the question, what were the conditions? he replied that he should be granted immunity from punishment, and protection out of the country, with a small sum of money, sufficient to commence an honest life in a new place; that no one of the gang should ever have the slightest intimation that he was connected with their capture.

The superintendent, telling him he would take the matter into consideration, departed. Upon consultation with several of his coadjutors he concluded to accept the conditions. It was a fair offer; they would keep possession of their prisoner until they proved the truth or falsity of his assertions.

So upon the sixth day, in company with several of his brethren of the force, he returned to the jail and told the prisoner they had concluded to accept his proposition. The wily Jew would tell nothing until the whole matter had been spread on paper in black and white to his entire satisfaction, which preliminaries consumed all of that day. But the next day, matters being in trim, he stated circumstantially and in detail what has been already laid before the reader: the existence of the safes underground, and the vast amount of plunder therein concealed.

Here then was a case brought to the attention of the metropolitan police—a job for them to do—requiring the exercise of the best judgment, the coolest nerve and the utmost circumspection. They proved themselves equal to the task. Whatever may be said about the police of London in general, in this instance they covered themselves with glory. Henry Wetherell proceeded to work immediately, quietly, patiently, persistently. The utmost care had to be exercised that none of the gang should get wind of the matter; and to add to this difficulty, none of the citizens could be informed beforehand, no troops could be ready to lend their assistance, for no one knew who among the people or the troops might belong to the mystic band, and the least breath of the affair, that would have been sure to have followed any attempt to prepare the citizens, left the police but one course—they had no choice. That course was to inform those of the force who were the most reliable and trustworthy of the plan, and depend upon giving the rest information after the trap was sprung.

Superintendent Wetherell obtained from Lazarus Operman an accurate description, assisted by diagrams, of all the entrances to

the underground passages. The 25th day of July was the day fixed upon as the time when the trap was to be sprung. On that morning, previous to the commencement of the conflict that deluged London in blood and wrested millions of property from the hands of lawless men, this was the condition of things:

A detachment of police had been posted near enough to each of the points described by Operman to make a rush, upon the general alarm being given, and take possession of and hold them if possible. The point chosen as the place where the trap was to be sprung, and an entrance made in the first place to ascertain the correctness of Mr. Operman's information, was a large provision store in New Bond street. Under this store was a very large cellar, used principally for the storage of salt and dried meats.

Through the middle of this cellar ran a large wall; in fact, there were two walls about three feet apart, but presenting the appearance to the uninitiated of one solid brick wall, running through the cellar. There was a narrow space between these two walls wide enough to allow the passage of one or two persons at a time. On one

side of the wall, at a point known only to the initiated, was a spring which, upon being pressed, caused a door to fly open where before seemed to be only a blank wall. Beyond this opening was a second door, locked and under the control of a man on the inside. Between the two doors was a spring which, upon being pressed, rung a bell in the passage.

Here, night and day, a man heavily armed kept guard. The most usual time for any one to get in or out was in the small hours of the night; but in cases of emergency any one by going to the door and giving the pass-word, followed by the word "emergency," could be admitted. The slightest mistake in finding the spring or bell would be death to the whole plan.

In obtaining entrance there was another difficulty that seemed insurmountable; this was the chance that the pass-word might be changed; and in any event it was customary for any one wishing entrance to show his face to the guard within.

After long consultation upon this matter, the chiefs concluded to offer Israel Mundy the same terms as his master if he would consent to open the door. At first he refused decidedly, but after studying over it for

some time at length consented, as the offer was tempting and really involved but little risk to himself, as the guard at the door was sure to be killed if the scheme succeeded.

The man picked for duty at this key of the whole position was Jack Vincent, one of the best shots in England, and the best man in a fight. Now, my sportsmen friends, don't prick up your ears and wonder if I'm trying to stuff you. I tell you it is one thing to shoot pigeons, ducks or even men for past-time, another to shoot in the heat of conflict, with desperate men pressing you on every side.

At nine o'clock on the 25th of July, 1848, two men in disguise (who were no other than Jack Vincent and Israel Mundy) walked into the provision store before mentioned and wished to see some cut and dried meats, stating that they wished to purchase a large amount if they were suited. One of the proprietors immediately went below with the men to examine. The quick observation of Jack Vincent told him there were men ostensibly busy, but in reality guarding both pair of stairs they descended to reach the point where the meat was kept.

Having arrived in the cellar, they walked

back discussing qualities and prices until they reached the point where a signal, given by the foot of Israel Mundy, told Jack Vincent that this was the right spot. Suddenly the meat merchant received a blow from the policeman that stretched him senseless. He was bound and gagged, and Jack Vincent, pistol in hand, followed his companion to the point where the spring was concealed. In an instant the door flew back, Israel Mundy rang the bell, the face of a man appeared at the wicket, and Mundy removing the disguise from his face repeated the pass-word and the word "emergency," and also said: "Quick, Prader, I have just bilked the jail, and the Billys are right behind me."

The man immediately turned the key and opened the door, but very cautiously, and keeping well in front of it. Israel Mundy, as he had been directed, seized the edge of the door and gave it a quick jerk outward with all his force. In an instant a pistol shot rang out, the man dropped dead, and Jack Vincent, turning, gave a shrill whistle, none too soon, for a shot from some one entering the cellar just grazed his arm, making a flesh wound. The policeman's pistol spoke again, the man entering dropped; at the same in-

stant Israel Mundy received a shot and fell, the policeman's pistol spoke again, and the third man fell.

In the meantime a desperate fight had been going on through the stairways, but the amount of force here was large enough at first to put down all opposition. The general alarm had been rung immediately upon the first whistle, and now commenced as bloody a day as London has ever seen.

On one side a body of desperate men hurled themselves in masses upon the police, who stood like a rock and hurled them back. The citizens, having no knowledge of the state of affairs, could not take in the situation, and throughout that long day the conflict raged, the advantage being sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other.

In some localities the police were for a time overpowered; though they shot down the desperadoes in piles, they seemed to spring up on every hand and roll themselves upon the defenders in a never ceasing torrent. Desperate villains fought their way, inch by inch, to the passages where the plunder was stored, went below and returned with fortunes in diamonds, and fought their way, inch by inch, out again. Men were shot down with a king's ransom upon their persons.

In the very front, leading on his men, was the giant form of Luke Cavendish, the leader of the gang. This man had not been seen previous to this since his appearance at the burning of Cozzen's Hotel. A large reward was offered for his arrest, but on this day orders had been given to take him alive, for two reasons; one was his gallant conduct in the rescue of the ladies from the fire, the other that he was in possession of information of vital importance for the police to obtain. He was the coolest, deadliest shot with a pistol, and feared nothing human or inhuman. Stripped to his waist, covered with blood, a wicked looking knife in his left hand, his pistol in his right, he rushed from point to point cheering on his men. Close at his right hand kept an attendant whose sole duty was to load his pistols steadily as they were emptied. These attendants were generally young men from fifteen to twenty years of age.

Five times on that day were these men shot down, and another would take the place. Pouring out a torrent of oaths the desperado rushed through the streets, the crowd seeming to give way before him as if he carried contagion. Although the police

would pile upon him until he was lost from view he would twist himself out, and woe be to the man who came within reach of his knife or was covered by his shooting iron.

At five o'clock in the afternoon the heaviest fighting seemed to be going on in Regent street. Evidently there was some important point here that both parties were contending for. The assailants seemed to be leaving other localities, and parties of policemen were struggling to force their way to this spot. To any one who dared to look from the tops of the buildings overlooking the conflict, the scene presented in the street below was appalling. From side to side of the street nothing could be seen but a tossing mass of clubs and knives. The noise was deafening—yells, curses, the report of firearms, the desperate rush on the one side and the steady repulse on the other.

But to any one able to look coolly upon the situation it was evident the villains were gaining an advantage. The condition of things was becoming desperate; a conflagration was raging at some point not far distant, and heavy clouds of smoke ascending, added terror to the scene.

Something must be done. Upon consul-

tation by the leading members of the police force it was decided that this burly villain must be killed. Soon after this a man might be seen stealing along the roofs overhanging the scene of conflict, carrying a repeating rifle in his hand. This man was Jack Vincent. Having arrived where a projection of the cornice hid his body and offered a slight protection from danger below, he thrust his weapon over the edge several times and glanced along the barrel; as often he withdrew back out of sight. Evidently this job of shooting a man as quick as Luke Cavenish, in perpetual motion, was not an easy one.

At length Jack Vincent disappeared over the roofs and was gone for a few moments, evidently for consultation with his chief. He reappeared and took his place, just peering over the edge of his barricade; (the conflict all the time raging in the street below, the giant keeping in front of his men urging them on,) suddenly there was a swerve back on the side of the police in front of the burly villain, so sudden as to take the assailants by surprise. At the same instant a sharp report rang out from the roof. For the first time the huge form of the leader was seen to

stagger, but waving his bloody knife around his head, and crying out, "Come on, boys, we'll drive the hounds to hell," he was about to spring forward—another sharp report from the roof, and with a leap into the air Luke Cavendish fell, shot through the heart. With the fall of the leader the conflict was virtually at an end. By twelve o'clock that night the police were in possession of most of the underground passages. In a few days they were in possession of all.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A DEATH.

"Now is done thy long day's work,
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.

Let them rave.

Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave.

Thee nor carketh care nor slander;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.

Let them rave.

Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.

Let them rave."

—*Alfred Tennyson.*

The place to which we now call the attention of the reader is not new to us; it is the invalid's chamber at Oldcroft Hall. It is very evident that a great change has come over the principal occupant of this room since we last saw him, under very different circumstances, in the same room on the night of the murder. Now he is propped up with pillows

in bed, and judging from his appearance, from the unmistakable signs of the approach of the great destroyer, it is very evident this room will soon be the chamber of death.

Ever since the night of the murder, the old gentleman has been gradually but surely failing. The dreadful circumstances and the air of mystery surrounding the murder of his first-born; the fact that he had struck the young man down with his own hand a short time before, though he considered it done in the exercise of a rightful authority; these things had worked on the old gentleman and hurt him more than anything that had previously taken place.

He had become a changed man; his voice, after that, was never heard in loud, passionate, fault-finding tones. He had become a meek, patient, sometimes despairing man, and his daughter had ministered faithfully to his wants; had given her whole time and energies to the invalid, although herself ready to give up in despair, and feeling as if it would be a luxury to lie down and die.

Now, death was surely approaching to claim a victim in the master of Oldcroft Hall. A sudden cold, contracted no one knew how, had laid him upon that bed, from which he was never to rise.

He had evidently just been making his will, for papers were scattered about, and a legal-looking man was still standing by the bedside. On the other side of the bed stood Mr. Miller, the clergyman of West Cove. The weeping girl sat a short distance off with her face buried in her hands.

At this moment the ringing of the door bell betokened a new arrival. A servant came into the room and, approaching the weeping girl, said there was a man who wished to see her. Although surprised at the summons, Miss Belle, as soon as she could, made her appearance before the stranger, who, upon her entering the room, immediately approached with outstretched hand and a very sympathizing air.

The man who thus approached was to her a complete stranger, and a hard man to describe. He might be described as a middle-aged, very respectable man, for he looked that. He might be a very young looking old man, or a very old looking young man, for he looked that, too. He might have been taken for a clergyman, from his extremely respectable and benevolent appearance; he might have been taken for a detective, from the sharp glance that occasionally shot from

his eyes; he might have been taken for this young lady's father, so kind and fatherly was his manner; and he might have been taken for her lover, under advantageous circumstances. He approached, extending his hand and saying:

"My dear young lady, I have to introduce myself to you, by name, Joshua Whitmore, and to beg of you to excuse this intrusion at such a time, for I fear you will consider it an unwarranted intrusion; but I have a communication to make to you that will explain all. But, first, I have a communication to make to your father. Is he rational?"

Miss Belle answered that her father was perfectly rational.

"Then, with your permission, we will go and make the communication to him first. What I have to say to you must be said at the first fitting opportunity, without taking up your time now. But now I want to assure you that I come here as your friend, and I want you to confide in me if you can. I assure you I will prove myself worthy of the confidence. I am a stranger to you, but I know your situation at this time, and deeply sympathize with you in these afflictive circumstances. I know your trials and just

how you are situated;" (approaching close to the weeping girl and lowering his voice to a whisper, he said: "I know all the circumstances attending the murder of your brother; I know your connection with these circumstances. You need not be alarmed—not at all; I come here as your friend, and the fact that I know all these circumstances, instead of causing you any fear, should rather encourage you to give me your confidence. You should be glad that another human being besides yourself knows the relation in which you stand to the murder. I assure you I come here only as your friend, with the *knowledge*, the *power* and the *will* to help you; and to lead you safe through the matter to brighter days, for rest assured brighter days will come. I pledge you my honor, I give you my word, I have no object in coming here but to see you righted, to give a little comfort to your father's parting moments. You may trust me."

Isabella stood (while this strange man poured forth these words in rapid utterance) finally with dry eyes—attracted—spell-bound. The man's air was assuring and invited confidence; he seemed to be possessed largely of that faculty known as animal magnetism.

There was something in the man himself, aside from anything he said, to inspire confidence. So when he took hold of her hand and said, "Shall we go to your father?" they went to the dying man's room.

At the request of Miss Belle the other persons in the room retired, and the three were left alone. Approaching the bedside Isabella said, "Dear father, here is a gentleman, Joshua Whitmore, who has something he wishes to say to you."

Immediately Joshua Whitmore came to the bedside and said: "My dear sir, as I perceive you are soon to leave this world, (I hope for a better,) I have come here for the sole purpose of saying that which I trust will be some comfort for you to hear before you go hence. I know what you have suffered since the murder of your son in so mysterious and unaccountable a manner. You may trust implicitly in what I tell you, for I have no desire to trifle with the feelings of a dying man. You may rest assured of this: these mysterious circumstances will all be cleared up—I know whereof I speak. You are now approaching the end of your earthly career; so this case—this mysterious case—approaches the termination of its

career, and will be made plain. I cannot go into details, I did not come here for that purpose; but I came here to tell you this much," raising his hand in an impressive manner, the stranger repeated these words: "*The hounds have struck the trail; nothing will throw them from the scent till the game is bagged; justice has slumbered, but the damnation of the murderer slumbereth not; justice awakes, judgment shall be done.*" Speaking now for the last time in this world to you, my dying brother, I repeat, *the hounds have struck the trail; nothing will throw them from the scent till the game is bagged; justice has slumbered, but the damnation of the murderer slumbereth not; justice awakes, judgment shall be done.*" As he repeated the last words he turned and left the room.

Isabella approached the bed, her father stretched out his hand, saying, "My daughter, what does this mean? Who is this who comes here at this time with these strange words?"

Placing her arm tenderly under the old man's head, Isabella said: "I do not know who he is, father; but somehow I have confidence in what he says."

The old man spoke up again: "My dear

daughter, is there anything you know about this matter that you do not like to confide to your father on his death bed ?”

Isabella, though trembling so she could hardly speak, said: “Yes, dear father, there is something which I cannot confide even to you; but I assure you I have never done anything of which your daughter should be ashamed. Dear father, I have often wanted to say this to you before, but we have both of us been afraid to approach the subject. There were things took place on the evening my brother was murdered that must look dark and mysterious to you; but rest assured, dear father, I have done nothing wrong—nothing you or I will be ashamed of in this world or in the next. Dear father, take what this stranger says to you just as he says it. Be comforted—all will come out right. You are going to leave me, and I hope you will soon be with mother; there all will be made bright and clear. Oh, father! dear father! I wish I could go with you;” and she bent over the dying man, pressing her lips to the face on which the coming dissolution had already set its seal. “Dear father, *do* be assured this will come out all right; and it will be all right any how if we all get to a better world.”

The old man held his weeping daughter to his breast, and said: "My dear Belle, I know you have not done anything wrong; you never did any wrong; you have been my comfort, my hope. You have been all I had in this world; you have been the best daughter that such a wretch as I was ever blessed with. I have made a will, leaving you everything. You are absolute mistress here from this time; I say this for there is another thing I want to say to you."

"Whenever the man comes that you think you can love—only be sure he is a good man and will take good care of my daughter—I now say marry such a man with your father's blessing, which I now give."

The weeping girl hung over the dying man, soothing and comforting him, while her own heart was ready to break.

From that time he sank, slowly, surely, quietly, into the arms of death. As the afternoon sun was approaching the western horizon he fell into that sleep to be broken only by the Archangel's trump and the voice of God. That night an orphan girl stood by the ashes of her dead, and as she looked upon the cold face of him whom she had loved so devoutly, she stretched out her

hands imploringly to the Creator of the Universe, as if to ask why, in the unalterable decrees of Providence, such things were? While many a mother even then struggled, toiled, suffered to procure the necessities of life for a house full of children, she stood here, absolute mistress, in the midst of a wealth whose magnitude she did not even comprehend; looking upon the ashes of the last of her name, with heart shrivelled, affections blighted, life seemingly a failure, and kneeling by the side of that body still so dear to her, she stretched out her hands in mute supplication to Him in whose gift are the issues of life and death.

CHAPTER XXX.

A FUNERAL.

“ With fearful haste I saddled straight
An Arab courser, newly broke,
Whose strength and grace were fit to mate
With those that form Apollos' yoke.
'T was no meet moment to restrain
His mettled zeal. Away he sped,
With tossing mane
And flinging rein,
Upon the way he chose to tread.
The die was cast—flight, instant flight,
Alone could lend me hope to live.
The monarch born, the gem bedight,
The flattered god, the ever right,
Was now a friendless fugitive.”

—*Eliza Cook.*

On the following day, the communication that Joshua Whitmore had promised to make to Miss Isabella, was made in the secrecy of her own room. With this we have nothing at this time to do, except to state the fact that from the time that communication was made, the man, Joshua Whitmore, seemed to have reached that place in the confidence of this

young lady that he sought for; at least, so it would seem to one accustomed to watch the moods of humanity as they appear in the countenance and actions.

On the next day, which was the third day after the death, the funeral was attended by the largest concourse of people ever seen together on any occasion at West Cove. Not only were there many friends of this old man, but more, many more of his daughter. Joshua Whitmore accompanied the friends to the grave, riding in one of the family carriages. He stood near the grave during the service, maintaining a very sorrowful and pitying aspect, especially when he looked toward the young lady as she stood by the grave, leaning upon the arm of the clergyman of West Cove.

There was also another stranger present, who, some one had said, was from London, and whose conduct would have attracted attention had not every one been so busy with their own feelings and with the services at the grave. This man seemed to be very uneasy; several times he approached, as if he would stop the proceedings, then drawing off a little distance seemed to hold a debate with himself.

By the time the funeral cortege had reached the grave, it was evident one of those sudden and violent storms, so common on the coast, was approaching. The exercises were made as short as possible, and immediately upon their conclusion the horses' heads were turned homeward and they were urged to their utmost speed to reach shelter before the storm broke upon them.

Isabella called her friend Joshua Whitmore into her own carriage upon the return trip. While they were sitting in the carriage with closed windows, going at great speed toward home, a man, wrapped in a cloak, passed the carriage on a horse urged to his utmost speed, and Mr. Whitmore remarked: "That man will be killed, if he do n't kill his horse." That man was she stranger from London.

Before the returning party could reach the doors of the Hall, the storm burst upon them in all its fury. Having arrived at the door, Isabella, Joshua Whitmore and the clergyman made as rapid a passage as possible from the carriage to the Hall.

Immediately upon the door being opened a stranger appeared in the hall. Miss Isabella noticed that he glanced past her as she entered to see who came next. The man

who stood there waiting for them was the man who had passed them at such break-neck speed—the stranger from London.

As Joshua Whitmore entered the hall the stranger laid his hand upon his shoulder, and said:

“Sir, you are my prisoner.”

“Your prisoner—and for *what*? Who are you?”

Turning back the collar of his coat and displaying the star of the London police, the stranger replied:

“I am Ed. Downing, of the city police, at your service; and you are Nicholas Squelch; I know you, and I arrest you for the murder of Ralph Oldcroft on October 11th, 1847. Come, my man, *I know you*.”

And pulling off the hat of the unfortunate Mr. Squelch he also pulled off a gray wig and a pair of whiskers. There was no mistake this time; there undoubtedly stood Nicholas Squelch.

“Here, my man, you have worn these things long enough, now we’ll change and wear these awhile.” So saying Ed. Downing pulled out a pair of hand cuffs and slipped them on the man’s wrists.

At first Isabella had started forward as if

to interfere with the arrest in her house, but in a moment changed her mind and said nothing during the transformation of Joshua Whitmore into Nicholas Squelch. But when Ed. Downing immediately insisted upon having out a carriage to carry his prisoner to the railway station, Isabella at once took her place as mistress of the establishment, and said, decidedly: "No one from that house should assist him in such a storm." (The storm had indeed reached a terrible fury and seemed to shake the house to its foundation.) Ed. Downing still insisted, in not very complimentary language, on having his own way; but Isabella told him *she* was mistress there, and had enough help to protect her from insult. If he chose to stay through the night, she would furnish him with a good room and every attention.

So Mr. Ed. Downing was fain to make the best of it, and was shown to a very comfortable room on the second floor, where he took his prisoner, and with pistol in hand installed himself as guard, determined that Nicholas Squelch should not escape this time. A very good supper was sent up to the jailor and his bird, and they partook of it turn about—

Ed. Downing feeding his man, an employment he did not at all fancy.

Two circumstances worthy of note occurred at the Hall that night.

Soon after the darkness of night had fallen, and the storm was at its height, some one, wrapped in a cloak, left Oldcroft Hall, defying the dreadful storm. This person went to the cottage of old Mrs. Brown, whom our readers will remember as the strange old woman. Another fact was that a light burned in Miss Isabella's room all night.

About eleven o'clock that night, and while the storm was raging with unabated fury, the figures of two persons wrapped in cloaks might have been seen stealing up under the windows of Miss Isabella's room. One of the persons threw some object against the glass of the window. In a minute more Miss Isabella herself appeared at a side door leading into the hall that crossed the main hall. These persons, upon getting inside, threw aside their cloaks, disclosing the forms of a powerful man, and an old woman, that it was not hard to imagine bore a resemblance to old Mrs. Brown, although there had been efforts made to transform her into some one else.

Leaving these persons standing in the hall, Isabella was gone for an instant, and returned with a tray of refreshments, wine, cakes and some other appetizing articles. The old lady took the tray, and Isabella led the way to the second floor and through the hall until within sight of the door where Ed. Downing kept guard over his prisoner. Here she stopped, and pointing to the jail door, turned and went down stairs again.

The man immediately pulled a knife, a rope and a gag from his pocket and laid them on one side of the door, and producing a large pistol he placed it in the right side of a belt he wore; then taking his station on one side of the door signalled the old lady he was ready.

She knocked on the door.

A voice said, "Come in."

She knocked again.

The voice, in louder tones, said, "*Come in.*"

She knocked again.

This time Ed. Downing made his appearance, growling out some bad language, but was immediately mollified upon seeing the inviting viands upon the waiter held by the

old woman, who uttered the single word "refreshments." Thinking that probably the old woman was deaf any how, he opened the door and said, "*Come in,*" then motioned her to come in. But the old lady, assuming a look of horror and pointing to the prisoner, shook her head.

Mr. Ed. Downing approached the door again, still very wary, with pistol in hand; but finally concluded to stick the pistol in his belt and take the tempting morsels to a safe place. He took hold of the tray, saying, in a loud voice, "You can go."

Suddenly there was a rush; the waiter was dashed from his hands to the floor, a man's form was upon him, with a grasp upon his throat that made his eyes start from their sockets. He was borne back upon the floor; he struggled desperately to reach his pistol, but a heavy knee was upon his breast, and a voice hissed in his ear: "The stiller you keep, my man, the better for you."

The old woman brought the gag and forced it into his mouth, and with the rope they tied him perfectly fast and secured the rope to the bed-post. Then they searched his pockets and found the keys of the brace-

lets, and unlocked the hands of Nicholas Squelch. Leaving Ed. Downing to his speculations they went below, out of the side door, and the three disappeared in the storm and darkness.

CHAPTER XXXI.

HEMMED IN.

"I checked my steed and lost some time,
To let that dumb retainer climb,
With whimpering joy, and fondly greet
The hand he ever sprung to meet.
I stooped above his glossy head,
And many a streaming tear I shed,
Ay, like a child,—but recollect,
In perils we must not reject
The meanest aid. The straw or plank
Will lure us then to snatch and thank."

—*Eliza Cook.*

Night was settling down on the great city; a very disagreeable, in fact, a horribly bad night; speaking, of course, in reference to the weather. The wind blew in furious gusts, driving before it a fine rain and sleet that penetrated most objects, animate and inanimate, and a dense fog hid every object from view that was not close to the beholder's nose.

On this night, and just as the darkness of the day was merging into the deeper dark-

ness of the night, a man emerged from one of the sewers at the west end of London, in an awful plight; (speaking of his appearance;) still, it was evident that he would have passed for a very good-looking young man in more favorable circumstances; now he was covered with dirt and sand from head to foot. Indeed, every inch of his person seemed to be occupied with soil; his clothes were torn in several places, and he had the aspect of a very badly damaged scare-crow, and looked as if he had lived in the sewers for some weeks. He also had that hunted look that becomes habitual to those who are constantly anticipating pursuit.

This man was just what he looked to be. He was a hunted man, and had been in the sewers of London. He was no other than our old friend Nicholas Squelch, who, coming to London early in the morning of this day, had been discovered by the police, and all day the pursuit had been kept up. He would have been captured long before this but for the simple fact that, although there were many against him, there were also many for him. He had his friends everywhere throughout the great city sworn to protect him even to death.

Many times during that day's pursuit had the "stars" been brought to grief; many times, while in full pursuit of their prey along the crowded streets, the officers would be tripped up or receive a violent blow that tumbled them headlong into the gutter, while the man that delivered the blow would mingle with the crowd and disappear.

"Though lost to sight, to memory dear."

But now the toils were evidently closing in around this man. Every avenue of escape seemed closed up. Every railway station, dock, steamboat landing and street guarded.

On emerging from the sewer, he made for an alley as soon as possible, and kept his way for some distance, skulking from sight, going by unused and difficult paths till he came out into a short street, and immediately after entering this street, passed a man, evidently one of his friends, for he spoke hurriedly to him as he passed without stopping.

"I am going home to get some supper. Watch the house and let me know if the traps come." Passing two others, he repeated the same words.

Near the end of this short street he came to the place called home; the only home, at any rate, that he had in the wide world. The

house was small, two stories in front and running back to a low shed, the door of which opened directly upon an alley.

Nicholas Squelch, first looking carefully to see that none of his pursuers were about, approached the back door and went in. There was no light when he entered; but in a moment a young girl of about seventeen years appeared, bearing a light, which she placed upon the table, and then, regardless of consequences, threw her arms around this dirty man, saying:

"Why Nick, where did you come from? I am so glad to see you. But what in the world is the matter? Where have you been to get so dirty?"

The brother returned the salutation heartily, saying: "Hist, Jennie, the Billys are about. I have been chased all day. Get me something to eat as soon as you can; I have had nothing to eat since last night, and crawling through sewers is hard work."

The sister started immediately to procure the supper, but as she was leaving the room Nicholas called her back, saying, "Where's Bull?"

"Bull is in his house. Dō you want him?"

"Yes; bring him in."

Bull soon appeared, very glad indeed to see his master, who took him into the middle of the room and set him down. Pointing with his finger to both doors he gave him a knowing look and went back to the seat he had just left, which was upon a small bed standing in the corner of the room. This room had one outside door and one window.

Jennie soon returned bearing a plate heaped with cold victuals; and with her also came an old lady, who also kissed the dirty, ragged man as Jennie had done before. The light being removed to the front room, so as to leave this back room dark, Nicholas commenced his supper with a relish, the mother and sister keeping up an animated conversation with him in a low tone. Nicholas was not able to give that attention to them that he ought, from the fact that his mouth was kept very busy all the time getting his supper into proper condition for his stomach.

At length he found time to ask where sister Emma was.

Jennie replied, "Oh, Emma is doing first-rate; she has gone as housekeeper—head housekeeper—at old Mr. Manning's, the rich old bachelor. Now, wouldn't it be funny if

she should marry old Mr. Manning? You know the old man thinks a great deal of her, anyhow."

Nicholas admitted that it would be very funny, and he thought also that it would be a very good arrangement, but didn't think it hardly probable.

The conversation having now taken the turn that pleased Miss Jennie, she came and, placing her arm over her brother's shoulder, while he continued to masticate steadily, said: "Now, Nick, how about the young lady you were engaged—"

"What young lady? I ain't engaged to any young lady."

"I didn't say you was. I mean engaged in her business. The young lady that you said, when you was here before, you was in her service; that this running around, and being chased by the police, and mixed up with these murders, and all that sort of thing, you know; that you and the young lady was mixed up in together. That you were working for her, and she was such a nice, beautiful young lady. I tell you, sir, I remember all about it; catch me forgetting such things. I have hardly thought of anything else since you was here. And now,

Nick, tell me, like a good boy, are you going to marry the young lady?"

At this point Nicholas, by the exercise of great agility, was able to put in his disclaimer, saying, "No, I'm not going to marry the young lady; that is, not as I know of." This, of course, was very satisfactory to his hearers.

"He is going to get himself killed." (It was the mother's voice that spoke now.) "He is going to get himself killed. Oh, Nicholas, you don't know what I suffer. I wish you wasn't mixed up in any such thing as this. Did you tell the young lady that you had a mother and two sisters dependent on you? That you are all they've got. And you'll go and get yourself killed by the police. And you'll kill somebody, and be tried for murder. And who will care when you are brought back here dead but your poor old mother and sisters? I don't believe you would be guilty of murder, but you're mixed up with it, and the young lady's mixed up with it, and you're working for the young lady." And so the old lady went on, her tears flowing profusely.

Then Miss Jennie, not having abandoned

the field, commenced again: "The young lady ought to pay you well, if you're not going to marry her."

"Oh, that reminds me," said Nicholas, and producing a roll of money from his pocket handed it to his mother, saying: "Here, mother, take that. If I'm nabbed to-night you'll have that much safe anyhow."

The old lady's lamentations broke out afresh; and Jennie, putting her arms around the neck and her face against the face of the dirty man, said, "Now, Nick, don't go away to-night; we can hide you here,—can't we mother?—so no one can find you."

The old lady joined her solicitations to those of Jennie, trying to get Nick's consent to be hid away until danger was passed. But their efforts were unavailing; nothing could move him from his purpose to leave London that night. He said: "No; I tell you what it is, dear folks, I must go. I can't tell you anything more to-night than I have told you, but only this: where duty calls me I'll go. Most people think I'm a trifling sort of a fellow, but you may depend upon it, that where duty calls Nicholas Squelch he'll go. And duty calls me to leave London to-night, and I shall leave. I don't want to kill anybody—"

"Nor have anybody kill you," interposed Miss Jennie.

"I do n't want to kill anybody. I have n't killed any one yet, although they've been chasing me now a precious long time; but I tell you, if any man's life stands between me and leaving London to-night, *I'll snuff that man's life out as I would snuff yonder candle!*"

"Do n't, Nick. I shall be afraid of you if you say such horrible things."

"No, sis, you wo n't be afraid of me for doing what I think is right, no matter how I do it, or what it costs."

"I know; but you do n't tell us anything, and we——"

What the rest of Miss Jennie's remark might have been, deponent saith not; for at this point Nicholas raised his finger warningly. There was a low whistle at the door.

Nicholas walked to the door, opened a very small crack, and a voice was heard saying: "The Billys are here, Nick; mind your eye."

The young man closed the door, turned to the two pale women and told them to go in the front room, close the door between, and put out the light, and if any one came to the front door to tell them he had gone. Then,

in the dark, he and Bull took their stations at one side of the door.

He had made his calculations aright—that the police would approach this door, as they had already seen the glimmer of the light through the cracks.

Soon two stars approached with a dark lantern, tried the door and found it fast then the window, found it fast; returned to the door and, one of them bringing some heavy object, commenced battering, and in a few moments the door gave way. One of the men, poking the lantern very carefully forward so as to throw its light across the room, said in a whisper to his comrade: "I guess the fellow's in the front part of the house; but there's no danger of his getting out of there; we're prepared for that. But we'd better go in and take down the next door." So saying, he stuck his nose very carefully into the room, but before he could catch sight of the occupants, Bull had him fast on the floor. A shot intended for the dog missed him, but hit the arm of the man the dog was holding.

At the instant the first man went down Nicholas sprang out, coming with terrible force against a man going the other way,

and both rebounded and fell flat. Nicholas was up and away, without waiting to see what damage was done, or ascertain the results of several shots fired by both parties around the house.

CHAPTER XXXII.

ROWED OUT.

“On, on we went; I took no heed
How such strange career would end.
I urged my barb to meteor speed,
But cared not where that speed might tend.
He sprang, he flew, as though he knew
A phrensied wretch was on his back,
And kept his pace for goodly space,
Upon his own free chosen track.
He bore me on for many an hour,
With headlong speed and bounding power.”

—*Eliza Cook.*

Nicholas rushed through the alley on which his house was situated, and came to another where a man stood and pointed the direction to take. Immediately upon his passing in here, the man who had directed him stooped down under cover of a house on the corner and gave the first policeman that appeared a stunning blow with a club, then followed in the same direction he had bid his friend take.

Nicholas made his way to the river without molestation, for he was well posted in all the

means by which to keep out of the way of pursuers after leaving the immediate vicinity where they were watching his house. He knew the struggle must commence again as he approached the river, for probably every wharf was well guarded. He had made arrangements for several of his own boats to be upon the river, and had agreed upon several points where his friends were to take him up.

As he approached the point where he expected to find one of his boats, he first looked carefully in every direction, then stole under cover of a large pile of wharfage until he could, by scrambling down the edge of the dock, take a survey in every direction where he expected a boat to lie. But he could see nothing of any boat, at least in the range of vision, which was rather small on account of the fog; but there was light enough from various quarters to show that there was no boat at the point where he expected one.

He started ashore again, with the intention of going to another designated point. As he neared the end of the dock a "star" suddenly appeared before him with a pistol pointed at his breast, and uttering the single word "Surrender!"

"Surrender what? I hain't got nothing that belongs to you."

"You are my prisoner, my man," said the star, his eyes glistening and his hand fairly shaking, not with fear, but with excitement, that he should be the man of all others to arrest this Nicholas Squelch that the whole force had been running after all day. But Nicholas had seen, at the commencement of the parley, what his friend, the star, had *not* seen, that is, one of his own men gradually but surely drawing to the spot where the policeman stood. He might have shot the star down himself, and before discovering the proximity of his friend he had drawn his pistol for that purpose; the policeman demanded his pistol; he gave it to him; but he had only just performed this act of condescension when the unfortunate officer received a tap that snatched his victory from his grasp; and Nicholas, seizing the weapon from the fallen man's hand, followed his comrade to a boat near by, and, jumping in, both men took the oars, none too soon, for another boat with four rowers and two stars shining across the murky fog, started in pursuit.

It was soon very evident the pursuers were gaining upon them, and something must be

done. They had taken the middle of the stream with the intention of getting as far down as possible before they were overhauled. Nicholas said to his comrade: "Take up to the shore, Joram, and run into the end of Vauxhall Bridge."

In a few moments they reached the bridge, and as the boat shot under the arch Nicholas, throwing down the oars, jumped from the boat and scrambled into a niche in the wall, while his man went on; and in an instant more the other boat shot past in pursuit, within a few feet of where he sat. In a few moments Joram was overhauled, and not finding the man they were looking for the police took poor Joram in limbo and started in search of the missing man.

While they were rowing over that portion of the river where they had such a fruitless race, they came upon another boat in which sat two men who seemed to be fishing; for they had a light, and one man was laying on his oars while the other was pulling at a line. As they passed this boat Joram seemed suddenly to be struck with its appearance, although it would have been hard for any one else to have seen anything unusual. As they passed, Joram sung out, "Why, Sam, you've

got a hole there in your boat! Lurch the tiller and luff the swinger."

"Aye, aye, messmates; I'll do it."

In a few moments the man called Sam, having watched the other boat out of sight, drew up his fishing line, and taking the oars struck a bee-line for Vauxhall Bridge. After running under the bridge he first gave a low whistle, then waited for a reply; then rowed to another point, gave another whistle, which was answered. Running up to the point from whence the sound proceeded, he said: "All right; the trap's lagged."

The voice of Nicholas Squelch answered, "All right, this is the plant." So saying, he dropped into the boat and lay down. The two men began rowing down stream with all the speed possible. For two miles they were enabled, by watching carefully and taking the right shoots, to keep clear of breakers; then they suddenly came upon a single star and a single rower. They were seen before they could change course.

In an instant Sam gave some order to his comrade. They both drew pistols. As the policeman approached the voice of Sam was heard in deliberate tones, saying: "See here, my cove, do you see that light? (Pointing

to a light that blazed from a large vessel at anchor.) You steer straight for that light, and do it quick, and let me see you do it, or I'll give you to feed the fishes in the river."

Without a word further from either party, the discomfited officer ordered his rower to pull in the direction sam had indicated. The instant Sam lost sight of them in the fog he turned to his companion and said: "Now for it; that fellow will bring the Darbys after us and no mistake. Nick, you had better get up and get into a pair of oars, and we'll see if we can't outrow them anyhow."

Nick got up, and the three men bent their whole force upon the oars, making the boat fly like a streak of lightning through the water. They were all splendid oarsmen, and being determined to go in on their muscle, did not try to pick their way, but kept the middle of the stream as near as possible.

Sam's prediction was soon verified. Two boats could be seen in pursuit, and these boats each had four rowers, and one solitary star blazing in front. It soon became evident they were being steadily overhauled, and they began to cast about for some new scheme to elude their impending fate.

It was impossible to talk, for all their

efforts were directed to the task before them, and they were beginning to feel the premonitory symptoms of giving out, when they came suddenly upon another boat with two fishermen laying upon their oars. At this point the pursuers were so near that the officer in the leading boat called upon them to stop, at the same time yelling to the fishermen, "Stop that man."

As the boats approached and came almost to a stop, the fishermen yelled out, in a voice loud enough to have been heard a mile: "Halt ! I tell you halt !" at the same time sinking his voice to a low key, he said: "Mind, Nick, when I fire you take water to Bowyer's Dock ; I'll take you up there."

Nick's boat commenced moving off. The fisherman yelled out again in a loud voice: "Halt ! halt !" at the same time firing.

Nicholas gave a tremendous jump and fell into the water. The police rowed up, and at once began cursing the fisherman for shooting the man. "You spalpeen, I didn't tell you to shoot the man."

"You told me to stop him, and I did stop him, sure. He's gone to the bottom, sure."

"Yes; and I'll arrest you for shooting a man. You had no authority to shoot him."

In an instant four as wicked looking men as you'd wish to see drew their revolvers, and the man who had done the shooting said: "No, no, my man, you'll not arrest any one here to-night. You told me to stop the man, and I stopped him; I obeyed your orders, and all I've got to say about it is, if you attempt to arrest any one here to-night we'll send you to the bottom after him."

It was useless to argue the question. So the boats parted company, some to get material to drag the river at the spot where the shooting had been done. In a few moments after separating the fisherman's boat made directly for Bowyer's Dock. A man was there, clinging to the dock and keeping out of sight as much as possible. That man was Nicholas Squelch.

In a few moments he was in another boat with four rowers, making his way rapidly down the stream; and in two hours reached a point where, jumping to the shore, he disappeared in the darkness.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

LOVE'S LAST MEETING.

"From the desert I come to thee
On a stallion shod with fire;
And the winds are left behind
In the speed of my desire.
Under thy window I stand,
And the midnight hears my cry;
I love thee, I love but thee,
With a love that shall not die
*Till the sun grows cold,
And the stars are old,
And the leaves of the judgment
Book unfold!*
—Bayard Taylor.

The course of our story now brings us to a task not altogether so pleasing as some that have preceded it, in this respect, that it compels us to detract, in some degree, from the high estimation with which our readers must have hitherto regarded the heroine of our story, Miss Isabella Oldcroft. But a desire to give a veritable history, and also the true course of this tale, both unite in the demand that we give facts as they existed,

leaving the reader to draw such inferences as he may from these facts.

Do we not all admit the force of the master passion that sways the world? that is, the love of man for woman, of woman for man. So universal and irresistible is this force it spurns all restraint, overcomes all opposition, outrides the conventionalities, usages, and sometimes, decencies of society. And who does not know the thralldom of the infatuation growing out of this state of things? Who, in their own experience, or the perusal of the news of the day, cannot give evidence on this point? How often a gifted, beautiful and accomplished young lady, surrounded by all that wealth can give and loving hands bestow, stoops and throws herself away on some man infinitely below herself in social standing, in wealth, and also in purity and goodness. And had the heroine of this tale become another victim to this all-pervading infatuation? Candor compels us to say that, judging by the evidence of one's own senses, by the sight of one's eyes, this did seem to be the case.

Ever since the day when this man Nicholas Squelch made his appearance upon the scene, on the day of the old gentleman's

death, a subtle change, marked and unmistakable, had come over the lovely girl; before this, drooping, despondent, hollow-eyed, seemingly going into quick consumption; now she had become bright and cheerful; love's glance was in her eye, love's smile upon her cheek. Was it possible that this girl, gifted, accomplished, educated, was going to mate with a man who had only a common education to boast of? Was it possible that this girl, the embodiment of truth and purity, would stoop to wed a man who associated with the lowest villains of the land?

Nearly three months had now passed since the father's death, and nearly every day of that time had this man been to the house, or she had gone out to some appointed spot to meet him. The neighbors, who loved this girl as they did their own children, looked on and wondered to see this gray-haired man come there day after day. Others, who had an inkling of the fact that this man was a hunted man, liable to be arrested for some crime, wondered and deplored more.

The old housekeeper, who had seen this girl grow up from her cradle, not being

able to contain herself, approached the subject with her young mistress, in the most delicate manner, with fear and trembling; but the only satisfaction she obtained from this interview was the remark from Miss Belle, "She might marry a worse man. Mr. Squelch was a nice man, and she liked him."

The clergyman, Mr. Miller, being impelled by his fear for this lamb of his flock, also approached the subject, but the only result he obtained was the request from Miss Belle not to judge Mr. Squelch uncharitably. The Bible said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." She had confidence in Mr. Squelch; he had been very kind to her; she trusted in him a great deal. She did not say she loved him, but that was implied, of course.

And looking at this case unprejudiced and untrammelled by any considerations of expediency, or the ordinary rules that govern and control society; looked at, I say, as the simple fact of the love of one sex for the other, what was there so strange, so out of the way about it? Certainly it was the natural result of natural causes.

Here was a man of singularly pleasing

manners and sweet and winning smile, a certain undefinable something, a mixture of animal magnetism and some other subtle power that goes farther with all women than lands and money, title or position. What wonder was it that this orphan girl had felt, acknowledged and yielded to this subtle influence.

Early on the afternoon of October 28th, 1848, the mistress of Oldcroft Hall sat in one of the large drawing rooms, opening directly upon the main hall, surrounded by all the attractions of beautiful carpets, sofas, ottomans, mirrors, flowers and books; she looked the most beautiful adornment of all. She was reading, or trying to read, but it was evident the book had no interest for her. Her eyes wandered continually from the book to the window, and she listened as if momentarily expecting the approach of some one. She was not to be disappointed. The door-bell rang, and the expected man entered. Yes, the same. She advanced swiftly to meet him; and, oh! shades of the great Olympus! their lips met in a warm embrace. This mistress of Oldcroft Hall and one of the members of the secret brotherhood of crime. Yes, there is no use in denying it; it was just

so; and that soft and melting voice broke the silence with: "Dear Nicholas, I was so afraid you wouldn't come. I've waited so long for you."

Nicholas replied: "I have come, dear Belle, to see you, perhaps for the last time, before I am arrested for murder. The officers are watching the house now. I have had hard work to get here at all. I have come to tell you that the witness who you know was absent in foreign parts, and whose testimony it was necessary we should have, has reached the shores of England to-day. I am ready, for your sake, to be arrested, tried, and to die for you if necessary."

"Do n't say that, dear Nicholas. How can I ever repay you for your kindness?"

Raising her hand to his lips, Nicholas replied: "Dear Belle, you do repay me a thousand fold. I ask for nothing but your confidence, your esteem, your love; for this I would willingly die. The trial approaches, time is nearly up; the blow must fall on me. But for one smile from you, to save you from one pang, from any sorrow, or any seeming taint of crime, I say again I will gladly die."

"Dear Nicholas, I hope all will come out right; that we will both be spared for such happiness as we have yet never known."

Seizing her hand again, Nicholas kissed it passionately, saying: "I care not whether comes life or death, so that I win your love and esteem. For a smile from you I count no price too great. Before another twenty-four hours I suppose I shall be in the hands of the officers; but however that may be, I know, Belle, I may depend on your promise to me, and I shall willingly endure all, relying upon that promise, and the remembrance of your loving smile, and the hope of your future happiness. I have but one desire in life——"

What that desire might be was not stated; for at that moment there was a noise as of some difficulty taking place in the hall, near the door of the room in which they sat.

Isabella rose and had proceeded half way to the door when it was thrown violently open and a man—yes, the same everlasting Ed. Downing—advanced, revolver in hand, passed her without so much as 'by your leave, madam;' and covering Nicholas Squelch with his weapon, said: "You are my prisoner." At the same time he advanced to complete the arrest by putting his hand upon the man; but there was the sudden glint of bright steel, a long knife flashed before his eyes, and a voice fearfully cool said: "Keep your dis-

tance, or I'll cut you into two pieces quick."

Isabella had locked the door immediately after the unceremonious guest entered, and rang the bell; and upon a servant appearing, had given the order, "Send John here."

John appeared. Going close up to Ed. Downing, the mistress of the house said: "What do you mean by entering my house in this manner?"

Ed. Downing drew himself up to his full height and said: "My lady, I mean this: You interfered with and prevented the arrest of this man once before, but you won't do it this time; the house is well guarded outside. I don't want to shed blood; indeed, my orders were not to kill this man, but to arrest him and take him to jail, and I shall do that, no matter what may be the consequences."

The only reply to this harangue was the order given, "Here, John, put this fellow out of doors. He came in here without even knocking at the door. I command you to put him out."

"Yes, yes, my lady, and I'll do it. The dirty spalpeen, to come into a lady's room without knocking." And John advanced directly upon Ed. Downing; but his mistress countermanded her order when he had nearly

reached the muzzle of the man's pistol, for she did not want John shot before her eyes, and this seemed likely to be his fate; for Ed. Downing, with weapon levelled, declared he would shoot him the instant he laid hands on him.

Here was a dilemma. The two men and the mistress of the house stood looking at each other and at the murderous weapon that kept them at bay.

There was one man there equal to most emergencies, and that man was Nicholas Squelch. He advanced as close as he dare to the wary policeman, watching him narrowly. It was evident he could not cover both men with his weapon at the same time, so he approached nearer, talking all the time.

"Now ain't you ashamed. In the first place to come into a lady's room in this way; and in the second place to stand there threatening two men and a lady with a pistol, while they have only a knife between them." He had advanced nearer and nearer, swinging his knife at Ed. Downing who, unwilling to shoot, had retired before his advance, farther and farther, until now he stood with his back to a table, unable to go further, and with John

close at his right hand, and his foe with the ugly-looking knife directly in front.

Ed. Downing knew perfectly well what these maneuvers meant; but his one mistake was that he did *not know* the marvelous quickness of the man who was brandishing the knife before him. He was debating the point whether he had not better shoot this man and make explanations to his superior officer afterwards, when, quick as the lightning drops from a cloud, there was the clash of steel upon steel; the pistol turned in his hand and exploded, shattering a large mirror; another stroke of the knife through his right arm, and he was borne back upon the floor with both men on top of him.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ARRESTED.

"What an unthought of goal I'd won;
Mercy, what wildering race I'd run!
'Twould soon be o'er, my failing horse
Was strangely wheeling on his course;
His strength was out, his spirit flagged,
His fire was spent, he vainly lagged;
His dripping flanks and reeking neck,
Were white with rifts of foaming fleck.
His labored breath was quick and short,
His nostrils heaved with gasping snort;
He tottered on—his will was good—
His work had not belied his blood."

—*Eliza Cook.*

Mr. Ed. Downing, although he received a flesh wound through the arm, had this compensation of being waited upon by a pretty woman; for Miss Belle, upon finding he was wounded, did not have him pitched out of doors as at first ordered, but dressed the wound, with Mr. Squelch's assistance, in a very careful manner. Then John, taking the luckless officer to the door, told him to stay outside if he knew what was wholesome.

But Ed. Downing had this further satisfaction under these unfavorable circumstances, that, although he was outside the man he wished to capture was in; and he could stay there and starve the garrison out if no better plan presented itself. So he guarded every door and window thoroughly, and overhauled everybody that came out of the house, no matter who.

After the policeman had been ejected from the house, Isabella sent an order to the stables for the Chestnut Hunter (the swiftest and strongest horse in the stables) to be ready for orders.

A man from the Hall went to the stables to see this order executed. Excepting this man and John, no one had left the Hall since the guard had taken their positions; nor indeed for two hours was any life discoverable about the building. It might have been taken for a castle in a complete state of siege.

At the end of two hours a solitary girl, (at least what appeared to be one of the kitchen maids,) came out the back way, carrying a basket on her arm, evidently on her way to the stables. She had passed on but a few steps when Ed. Downing and one of his men,

thinking it well to ascertain the correct bearings of this craft, advanced, and laying his hand upon her arm, stopped her; but was immediately almost knocked over by John, who said: "No, no, my man; we've had enough of this here. You'll not stop this lass. This is my daughter, and if you or any other man puts his hand on her again there'll be another murder to arrest for." So saying, he brandished a murderous cudgel, that would have tired out any ordinary man, and standing between his girl and the men told them to come on. So he protected her to the stable door, and stood there ready to put his threat into execution at the least show of fight on the part of the enemy.

The lass, after entering the stable, went directly to the stall where the Chestnut Hunter stood ready for action. Setting down her basket, she stripped off her dress and disclosed the figure of Nicholas Squelch. Not the old man who had entered that afternoon into Isabella Oldcroft's room; nor the dirty, ragged man who had crawled through the sewers of London; but a fine looking young man, clad in a suit of "ye cavalier of ye olden time," black velvet heavily trimmed with gold and purple facings, high boots,

enormous spurs, on his head a hat with plume, at his side a sword. He had all the appearance of a faithful knight, going, not to the fray, but to see his lady love.

Taking a large cloak from the basket, that covered his gorgeous apparel completely, he led the Chestnut Hunter by the back way from the stables, keeping directly behind them so as to be hid from the Hall. He made his way by a path for the distance of half a mile from the stables, and hid from observation by the hedge, he threw the cloak upon the ground, and giving his steed the rein, rode rapidly forward to the high road, from whence he proceeded to the lodge gate, and entering, went at an easy gallop up the broad avenue towards the beleaguered castle.

The surprise of the guard, when they saw this fine gentleman of ye olden times approaching, may be imagined, but cannot be described.

When the cavalier had arrived within easy speaking distance of the Hall, he inquired: "Is this the castle of the Lady Isabella?"

No reply was given to this very civil question, but the guard, who immediately recognized the man of their choice, the object at which they were aiming, advanced

upon him immediately with the old cry of "Surrender !"

Putting spurs to his steed, the cavalier kept a respectable distance ahead of them. Drawing his sword he waved it around his head, crying: "Come on, my men! come on! Victory or death!" So he led them down the avenue, out the gates, and along the way towards the village of West Cove.

Horses were impressed into the service, and the race commenced in earnest. It was an exciting race through the streets of the village; many times almost within the grasp of his pursuers; over hedges, through ditches, until his horse was covered with foam, he led the score of policemen, and others who had been attracted to the spot by the unusual occurrence. Although the odds were against him, the cavalier seemed likely to get off at last whenever he took the notion to leave that part of the country, for the animal he rode was more than a match for anything his pursuers could boast. And after leading them a long chase, he would suddenly dart away and take up his position at some point far ahead and rest.

A few yards from the boundary of the Oldcroft estate, on the west, is the cemetery of

West Cove, the most beautiful spot for a resting place of the dead; upon a high elevation overlooking the sea, no place could be found in England that possessed more natural beauty.

As the sun was sinking to his bed in the ocean, casting his parting rays upon this lovely spot, the cavalier, the hunted man, putting his horse to his highest speed, and pressing far ahead of his pursuers, approached this silent resting place of the dead. Reaching the spot, he flung the bridle over a post, leaped the fence and approached the place where four graves indicated a family burying spot. Of these graves, one was the grave of the murdered man, Ralph Oldcroft the younger, and by the side of it was the grave of the father.

Here then, at the head of these two graves, the man stopped, drew his sword, stuck it upright in the ground over the grave of the murdered man; and drawing a knife—the same strange-looking knife with a singular handle—he seated himself at the head of the grave.

In a few moments a crowd of horsemen appeared, and after a little consultation, thirty men—the most of them being London police

and local constables—approached on every side, gradually drawing into a circle around this *hunted man*, who sat resting his chin on his hand, and with a look of the most complete idiocy upon his countenance. Having advanced until they formed a complete circle around him, Ed. Downing, being the chief man, approached and, placing his hand upon the man's shoulder, said : "Come, my man, you see your time's up;" at the same time pulling out a pair of handcuffs. In an instant the wicked-looking knife flashed in his face again, and the man jumping to his feet, said: "Yes, yes, I know the time's up. All right. But keep a little farther away from me; you might get hurt."

Ed. Downing, having a wholesome fear of that same knife, drew back. The *hunted man* stepped between the two graves, while the cordon of police, with weapons levelled, watched his every motion. Drawing his form to its utmost height, pointing with the knife and looking upward as if he would pierce the hidden secrets of the future, he repeated, in a voice that rang out loud and clear so that every one of that large assemblage heard distinctly: *The hounds have struck the trail; nothing will draw them from*

the scent till the game is bagged. Justice has slumbered, but the damnation of the murderer slumbereth not. Justice awakes, judgment shall be done!"

Turning to Ed. Downing, he held out the knife with a graceful gesture of acquiescence. The handcuffs were slipped upon his wrists, and he walked away in the midst of his captors, with the old smile, half derision, half defiance, on his face.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TRIED.

"I reached the city; many a year
Has rolled away
Since that long day;
But yet, behold, this truant tear
Proclaims that trying day is set
Among the few we ne'er forget."

—*Eliza Cook.*

The court for the trial of Nicholas Squelch, for the murder of Ralph Oldcroft, assembled at Stockton, the nearest assize, on the 7th day of December, 1848.

A great concourse of people were drawn together by the extraordinary circumstances attending the commission of the crime. So great was the crowd it was impossible for all to obtain admission to the room where the trial was held

There was one person present, an entire stranger, who could not fail to attract attention. No one knew who this man was or

from whence he came. He appeared upon the day of the trial; no one had seen him before. His face was covered with a heavy gray beard, with long gray hair falling upon his shoulders. These evidences of age contrasted singularly with his otherwise youthful appearance. He wore a cloak covering his form entirely, and never removed it during the progress of the trial. No one could perceive that he took any interest in the trial, for he seemed rather to maintain an aspect of stolid indifference, as he sat with folded arms near to the bar of the court.

It is not our intention to go into the details of the trial, but only to give those prominent facts proved on the trial, which are a necessary part of this history.

The prosecution introduced witnesses and proved, beyond a doubt, the following facts: That the young man who appeared at Oldcroft Hall at the time of the inquest, accompanied by a bull-dog, and stole the handle of the knife with which the murder was committed, was Nicholas Squelch; that the party who was afterwards arrested by Ed. Downing under the name of Doctor Oliphant, and escaped, was Nicholas Squelch; that the party who was afterwards arrested under the

name of Doctor Swan, and escaped, was Nicholas Squelch; that the party who appeared in the dress of a sailor and carried away the knife stuck upon a certain building was Nicholas Squelch; that the same Nicholas Squelch had written two letters, under assumed names, to Mr. Berrege, of the city police, one telling him to *dig* in a certain locality and find a head, and another offering, for the sum of 200£, to deliver up a knife, and a letter containing information that would secure the arrest of the party who committed the murder; these letters were proved to be in the handwriting of the prisoner.

Mr. Ed. Downing appeared and stated he had followed a person in disguise (afterwards ascertained to be Nicholas Squelch) over the greater portion of London, and finally into the country; that this man had purchased a knife of a man by the name of Ormandy, which knife corresponded in appearance with the stolen knife.

It was also proven that some of the money paid by Lazarus Operman on a certificate of deposit taken from the pocket of the man murdered at Bigbee's Hotel was afterwards in the prisoner's possession, as in two cases it was traced directly to him. In one case

he had used some of it in procuring a meal of victuals at an eating-house, and in another had bought a coat at a west end clothing store.

The deposition of Lazarus Operman was admitted, stating that the money so traced was the identical money he had paid to the man who had indorsed the certificate of deposit in his presence on the morning of the day the murder was discovered. And the witness from the eating-house, and also one from the clothing house, swore that the money was paid to them by the prisoner.

It was proven that Nicholas Squelch had come from West Cove to London on the midnight train the same night that the first murder was committed; this fact was proven by witnesses who saw him on his arrival in London, and who saw him on the train, and also by the conductor of the train.

It was proven that Nicholas Squelch was seen carrying some article to Doctor Mortimer's room at the hotel the day preceding the discovery of the murder, and the door being locked and the doctor gone out, he had gone to the clerk of the hotel, making various inquiries with regard to the doctor and his plans, indicating an extraordinary interest

in his affairs, which the clerk had thought very singular.

Finally, two articles, proved to be the property of Dr. Mortimer, were found on the person of the prisoner; one was a knife, recognized and identified by various persons at West Cove, as they had often seen the doctor using such a knife. This knife was not an ordinary pocket knife, but a medicine knife with a tortoise shell handle; the other article was a valuable ring that was identified as one always worn by the doctor during his residence at West Cove; this article was found wrapped in paper in the prisoner's pocket-book.

Surely here was evidence enough to implicate Nicholas Squelch as being concerned in both murders.

The only defense set up by the counsel for the prisoner was *insanity*; this, and this only. The defense made no effort to explain away any of the damning evidence introduced on the part of the prosecution; thus, in fact, admitting the truth of the evidence, and relying upon the simple fact of the prisoner's insanity that he was incapable of committing any crime, and the counsel for the prisoner made the most of this simple defense.

No one could say he did not do his best; no one could say he did not make a masterly effort, and with some effect. But he was engaged on the desperate side of the case, and he knew it. He made the most of all the eccentric tricks of the prisoner tending to show he was insane, and introduced three witnesses to prove that the prisoner's grandfather had been insane, and his father a very singular man, whom people used to call daft.

When the counsel for the prosecution took up his side of the case, he blew the theory of insanity to atoms. It is not our intention to try to reproduce the arguments of these two counsel, learned in the law, but only to give the outlines of the summing up on the part of the prosecution.

In his final summing up, the counsel stated in their order the facts which had been proven by witnesses, which facts the other side had not attempted to refute. Stating these facts, one by one, he made the most of them, and closed up this division of his subject by the statement that, as there had been no explanation offered by the other side, such facts must be considered proved. Then taking up the only defense offered, that of insanity, went on to say, that this defense

was perfectly absurd; more absurd as applied to this man than any man he ever had the honor to be brought in contact with. The prisoner had always been noted, in the city of London, as the sharpest, keenest hand that could be scared up; extraordinarily smart, and even precocious in his younger days. A genius in everything he turned his attention to—especially a genius in mischief. It was simply impossible that this man should have labored under any hallucination. He knew perfectly well what he was doing. He committed this double murder coolly and calculatingly; and from the time of the first murder up to this time had anticipated his own arrest for the crime; and had gone coolly to work to build up a theory of *insanity*. From the first, every act showed clearly such intention; that he was preparing himself before hand with this defense of insanity. With this end in view he had appeared at the inquest, and killed two birds with one stone by carrying away the knife with which he had done the deed. With this end in view he had committed all the eccentric acts of which counsel on the other side had made so much capital. As

for the motive for the commission of the murder—abundance of motive for this man—was found in the sum of money obtained from both murders.

He supposed the prisoner had help from other villains in the commission of the crime; it was very probable he did. With this fact he had nothing to do. He simply had to take care of the man caught, and, God helping him, he was going to do it. There was no need of argument on his part to show that this man was associated with some of the most desperate villains in England; it was a fact so well known he need say nothing about it. The counsel on the other side had endeavored to manufacture a great deal of pity for the prisoner out of the fact that he and another notorious villain had rescued two ladies from Cozzen's Hotel. He would not detract anything from the nobleness of the act—had no disposition to do so; but the man who could kill his best friend (as Doctor Mortimer had proved himself to be) was not a man to be at large for the purpose of performing daring and praiseworthy acts of heroism.

He had not the slightest doubt in his own mind that the prisoner was guilty of both

murders, and could not imagine it were possible that any man who had heard the evidence adduced could think otherwise.

In conclusion of his argument, of which only a meagre outline has been given, he warned the jury against turning a desperate villain loose upon society—a villain whose hands were then red with the blood of two murders. Warned them against any feeling of pity for a man steeped in crime and reveling in deeds of blood as if for pastime; as if he enjoyed and delighted to have the whole police of the city running after him. He felt safe in leaving the case to their decision, convinced that the retribution always waiting upon the murderer's track would appear here in the termination of this case and vindicate the cause of justice and right.

The counsel having concluded their labors, the judge gave his charge to the jury, of which we shall not attempt to give anything but the substance, which was that, if they found these facts as stated here by witnesses to be true—that is, the facts tending to prove that the prisoner, Nicholas Squelch, had murdered the two men, Ralph Oldcroft and Dr. Alfred Mortimer, or either of them, on the eleventh and thirteenth of October, 1847, as

charged in the indictments, they had but one course to pursue: they must find the said Nicholas Squelch guilty of the crime of murder.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ACQUITTED.

“ Methinks I’m getting sad—and see
The sun’s behind yon orange tree:
’Tis well my tale holds little more ;—
It wearies and I wish it o’er.
Sometime, perchance, when thou ’rt inclined,
I’ll yield thee more of what befell
The throne and bride I left behind ;
But now I do not care to dwell
On what, to me,
Will ever be
A most ungrateful theme to tell.”

—*Eliza Cook.*

The trial occupied five days, and it was near the time for adjournment on the evening of the fifth day; the case was given to the jury and they were about to retire, when the stranger who had been present during the whole progress of the trial, arose and requested the jury to wait a few moments, saying he had some important information to give relative to the case.

He was asked why he had not given the

information before. His only reply was that, if they would wait a few moments, he would explain everything satisfactorily.

Leave being granted him to speak, he addressed the judge and said:

"My lord, I wish to ask first if I am correct upon a point of law: Cannot a person who has satisfactory evidence to convict a party of the crime of murder, swear out a warrant for the arrest of such party, even before his evidence is proved?"

The judge answered: "He could, provided it was necessary to further the ends of justice, and especially if he supposed the party might escape, unless this was done—"

"Then, my lord," pointing his finger at Robert Keller who stood near him, "I demand the arrest of this man, Robert Keller."

The words had barely passed his lips when Robert Keller, turning ashy pale, started for the door; but the stranger was before him. Robert Keller tried to avoid his tormentor, and made for a window; but the stranger placed himself before him, drew a revolver and told him he would shoot him dead if he persisted in his attempt to escape.

By this time the most intense excitement reigned through the lately quiet room. Men

got up on benches and upon each other's shoulders and peered through the crowd, and those outside the room tried to force their way in, and cries of order, curses and expressions of wonder were mingled for a few moments in a babel of confusion. But the stranger stood and covered his man with his weapon, coolly and unflinchingly, while the crowd formed a circle around the two men, leaving them, seemingly, to fight it out on that line.

By the exertions of the officers of the court quiet was at length restored, and as it was evident Robert Keller was endeavoring to make his escape, it was considered no more than proper that the request of the stranger be complied with, and he be put under arrest until further explanation.

An officer stepped to the side of the frightened wretch, and the stranger stepped back in full view of the miserable man and of all the assemblage that could force an entrance into the room. The stranger said: "My lord, you have asked the meaning of these proceedings, and it is right and necessary you should have an explanation; you *shall* have it." Suddenly, with a quick motion, he threw his cloak upon the floor, his hat on top of the

cloak, a gray wig and a pair of whiskers followed, and to the astonishment of all that assemblage, there stood Doctor Alfred Mortimer, looking very much as he did the day before his disappearance and supposed murder.

An involuntary cry burst from the assemblage, and those nearest started back as if afraid there must be some hocus-pocus about this. The doctor said: "My lord, I am the man formerly known in this place as 'Doctor Mortimer.' I plead guilty to but one thing: My name is not Mortimer; I assumed the name when I came to this place for reasons that shall be explained. My name is Richard Oldcroft, and Ralph Oldcroft, Sr., was my uncle, my father's brother. I have in my possession satisfactory evidence to prove that this man, Robert Keller, murdered Ralph Oldcroft on the evening of October 11th, 1847. I am ready to give my own testimony, and also to produce witnesses to establish this fact, only asking for a delay of one day to procure the attendance of the witnesses.

Of course this request was granted, and the court, after setting the third day from that time for the new trial, adjourned.

Robert Keller was carried to jail, as the

wretched man was unable to walk, and presented the appearance of one who would defeat the ends of justice by a premature death if he were not soon executed.

The time of the next day was faithfully employed in procuring the necessary witnesses, among whom was Isabella Oldcroft. On the next day court again assembled, only a portion of those drawn hither by curiosity being able to obtain admission to the room where the court was held, and every door and window were crowded until the officers had to clear a way for the admission of air.

Richard Oldcroft being sworn, said: "My lord, before I proceed to give the direct account of my connection with this mysterious case, permit me to make a little introductory explanation. My lord, I am a surgeon by profession. I took up this profession as a matter of choice, in pursuance of my own inclination. As others have their inclinations and adaptations for certain pursuits, so surgery is a pastime with me. I cannot see a dead body without an irresistible inclination to cut it up. During my residence in London I had ample opportunity to gratify this

propensity, as there were plenty of subjects always easy to obtain; and Nicholas Squelch, who was then my office boy, is the best hand in England at the business. This much by way of preparation. I will now proceed with my explanation in as direct a manner as possible.

“On the eleventh day of October, 1847, I intended to go up to London on the midday train, but owing to unexpected business I was detained in my office until late in the day. I concluded I would go down and see Johnny Brown, a patient in whom I felt a great deal of interest indeed. So taking my case of instruments with me, I went down by the usual course, which is the path leading over the hedge and the rustic bridge. On my way back by this path, through the Oldcroft estate, I turned a little out of my way to a spot where I had, a few days before, parted with a young lady in whom I felt a great deal of interest, and who is one of the witnesses here present. There upon the ground I found a handkerchief belonging to the said young lady. Her name was on it, and concluding that it was a good thing to keep I put it in my pocket. I returned to the path and proceeded up the valley till I

came to the stair steps. Just as I reached the top of these steps I saw a man running east, who stumbled and fell—seemed for an instant to search for something he had dropped, and then hurried away. It was so near dark I could not recognize this person.

“Proceeding along towards the stile, I came upon the body of a man weltering in blood. I stooped down and felt the pulse, and was convinced that all life had fled. I opened my case, took some little rags and wiped the blood from the fearful wound in the breast, and noticed immediately that a blade, evidently broken off near the haft, protruded from the wound. I reached for a probe from my case for the purpose of ascertaining the length of the blade, which I could do without disturbing the position of the blade in the wound. I was just in the act of withdrawing the probe when a female figure, that I at once supposed was one of the domestics from the Hall, made her appearance on the stile and stopped, evidently spell-bound by the sight.

“Now here was a predicament—kneeling by the dead body of a man with whom I had a serious quarrel only a few days before. I was certain the female, whoever she might

be, recognized me, and would immediately rush to the Hall with the intelligence. The thought had not more than passed through my head when the figure turned and disappeared over the stile.

“Impelled by an irresistible impulse, and also by a desire to destroy identification of the body, *I immediately cut off the head.* Taking two handkerchiefs out of my pocket, one of which was the handkerchief of the young lady, I laid them upon the ground and put the head in, and then, for the purpose of complicating the case, I drew the blade from the wound and threw that in the handkerchiefs, and laying my case in the same receptacle I pulled off my coat and vest, as I never could do this kind of work with them on, and proceeded as rapidly as possible to strip the clothing from the body; expecting every moment to hear persons coming from the Hall. I had nearly completed the task of cutting off the outer clothing when the same figure made its appearance again upon the stile. What did this mean? Was the woman trying to get a good look at me? In an instant more she descended the stile and approached me. I hastily snatched up the handkerchiefs, forgetting my coat and

vest, and hid behind a clump of bushes to await further developments.

"The woman came to the body, stooped down and examined it. I could see, dark as it was, she was shaken by some strong emotion, it might have been terror. She sat down for an instant on the ground and buried her face in her hands; arose, and gathering up all the clothes, including my coat and vest, turned away toward the Hall.

"I was confused. For once in my life I was at fault. I was debating the question whether I had not better run after the woman, when I heard some one singing in the opposite direction. In a moment more, another female figure appeared at the top of the steps, coming up from the valley; evidently this person was on her way to the Hall. Would she see the body? Yes, she did see it, looked at it for an instant and started for the Hall, giving a scream at every step she took.

"It was time for me to be getting away from there, and I went immediately to the house of old Mrs. Brown, one of my best friends, told her the exact circumstances; told her I was going to London by the mid-

night train; to keep a sharp lookout and let me know everything that occurred.

"The two handkerchiefs I concluded to burn immediately. The head, by a process I have often used, I was enabled to keep, at least for the present.

"On my way to London nothing was to be heard of but the fearful railroad accident that had just occurred. This suggested a new idea to me, and I lost no time, after reaching London, in putting it in operation. I went immediately to my friend Nicholas Squelch, and told him to see if he could procure a body that would answer the purpose that I explained to him. He procured just the thing, the body of an unknown man which had sustained but a few bruises, evidently killed by internal injuries. I procured a trunk and had no difficulty in putting the body into the trunk and conveying it to my room at Bigbee's Hotel. My experience had taught me how to make the joints of the dead body supple enough for my purpose. Having got the body to my room, I covered up the bruises with a compound known only to myself, and made another one in the same place where I had received a bruise a short time before.

"I had no difficulty, after that, in leaving

the articles in the room as they were found, purposely dropping the certificate of deposit, and making my escape by the window. That is all I wish to state now, and if the court please, I would next wish to receive the testimony of Miss Isabella Oldcroft."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

VINDICATED.

"I was corrupt and did much wrong,
But never breathed of harm to her;
Mine was that passion warm and strong
Which keeps its radiance pure and long,
However else the soul may err.
I loved her with a zeal intense,
That thrilled each colder, wiser sense;
I drank the nectar from her lip,
As bees the honeyed poison sip;
I trusted her, my tongue revealed
All—much that should have been concealed."

—*Eliza Cook.*

Isabella Oldcroft being sworn, gave her testimony as follows: "On the afternoon of October eleventh, 1847, I went to see an old lady, who is one of the tenants on the estate, and who then was sick. I had worn an old bonnet and an old faded cloak belonging to one of the girls at the Hall, as it looked like a storm. I was returning on the other side of the hedge from the spot where the murder was committed when I determined that, as I was near the stile, I would go over the stile

and see if I had lost my handkerchief, and also a gold ring, at the spot where I had an interview with a friend a few days before. As I came to the top of the stile I was horror-struck to perceive the man whom I had supposed was at that time on his way to London, kneeling by the side of a body that I could see was a ghastly corpse and covered with blood; for the clothes were turned down from the breast and this man was, even then, in the act of drawing from the wound something that flashed in the fading light. I thought it could be nothing but steel, and I came to but one conclusion, the most natural one, that this man's hand had done the deed. I turned back to the other side of the stile—I sat down—I was weak—giddy—horrified—almost senseless. After sitting there some time, I concluded I would muster courage and look over again, not expecting this time to see the man still there. But he was there; and upon my advancing towards him—intending to speak to him if I could—(for I was dumb with horror) he turned and fled.

“I went to the body, recognized at once the evident intention to destroy the identity, and determined immediately that, let the consequences be what they might, I would

assist this man. Yes, I confess it, I would assist this man in his attempt. I carried the clothes to the Hall, not discovering until I reached my own chamber that I had carried away two articles belonging to the supposed murderer. All of these articles, being covered with blood, I burned."

Some questions were asked this witness which were satisfactorily answered. It is not our purpose to follow the minutiae of the trial. We will proceed with the other evidence.

Janet Somers, *alias* old Mrs. Brown—as she was known to the inhabitants of West Cove—being called and sworn, stated: "That on the evening of the eleventh of October, 1847, being in the act of speering around the estate, which I was much in the habit of doing, I noticed a man—whom I recognized as Robert Keller—whose actions seemed to me to be rather queer, for when I first noticed him he was on horseback, making his way through the brush and every out-of-the-way path where people don't generally go on horseback. I thought he could be on no good errand and I kept in sight of him. He came to the bank of the stream, Meadow Brook, and appeared to be hunting

for something. He soon seemed to have found what he was searching for. He got off his horse and commenced daubing the poor beast over with mud, and having got the job well done, he commenced and daubed himself all over from head to foot. Thinks I, Robert Keller has gone crazy, *sure*. Next he rode into the woods. It was now quite dark, and I had hard work to keep track of him, but I did. He got off, tied his horse and went straight to the old summer house, and was gone inside some time, and then came out and went off. I got a lantern and went to the old summer house to see if I could find out anything there. After looking for a long time, and being about to give it up, I saw a little bit of rag sticking out of a hole in the ground under one of the seats. I pulled the rag out; it was a shirt spotted with blood on the bosom and wristbands, rolled up tight and tied with a string to make it small enough to go into the hole. There was a name on the shirt, and I cut it off. (Here the witness produced a small piece of cloth with the name of *Robert Keller* written on it.) I tied up the shirt and put it back in the hole as I found it."

William Berrege, of the metropolitan po-

lice, called. Produced a pair of boots, and gave in detail the circumstances under which he found them. Knew the spots to be blood spots; had too much experience in such matters to be deceived. Had traced the boots to the shop of Jonathan Todd, shoemaker, who said he had made the boots for Robert Keller, and also had put a patch on one of the boots a short time before. Mr. Berrege also produced a piece of burnt handkerchief, and stated the circumstances under which he found it. Believed the doctor had not done the job thoroughly, when he attempted to burn the handkerchief

Jonathan Todd, called and sworn—Stated that he had made the pair of boots then there in court for Robert Keller; would know his own work any where; had also patched one of the boots.

Nicholas Squelch, the defendant in the first trial, being now permitted to testify as to the new matter disclosed, was sworn, and stated: That being informed by Doctor Mortimer how matters really stood, had determined to do a little detective business on his own hook. Had spent a long time going from shop to shop; had at length found the article he was looking for, that is, a strange looking, old-

fashioned dagger, at the shop of Philip Ormandy; that he had purchased the knife, Mr. Ormandy explaining to him the manner of opening the handle, and the gold plate inside for the name. Had then followed up the jewelry stores for the purpose of ascertaining where such a plate had been engraved; had dropped upon the right man. Stated the circumstances of the plate being spoiled in the first instance, so that the journeyman, Sol. Handcraft, had been compelled to furnish a new plate. Had purchased the defaced plate, with the name of Robert Keller engraved upon it; produced the plate and delivered it to the court.

Philip Ormandy, called and sworn—Confirmed the statement of the previous witness. Had sold the knife to this gentleman. To the best of his knowledge and belief had sold the knife with which the murder was committed to Robert Keller.

Solomon Handcraft, called and sworn—Stated that he had sold the gold plate to Nicholas Squelch, and confirmed the statement as to the circumstances under which the sale was made.

Theophilus Parker, called and sworn—Produced a package, and also a letter that

had accompanied the package at the time he received it. Had been requested by Richard Oldcroft (the party who had directed the package to him in the first place) to open the package in the presence of the court.

The package was opened. It contained a *knife handle* and the blade of a knife, both being covered with blood.

Several parties were called who had seen the handle of the knife before it was carried off at the inquest, identified it as the same.

Philip Ormandy re-called. Stated that he recognized the two knives there before him in court as the two knives he had sold, one to Robert Keller, the other to Nicholas Squelch. The knives being laid on the table, Mr. Ormandy was requested to open the handles of both knives in the presence of the court. He did so. There was the same gold plate in both knives, and on the plate of the broken knife was the name '*Robert Keller.*'

Nicholas Squelch re-called. Stated that on the day the murder was committed he came to West Cove to see Dr. Mortimer in reference to an important business operation in which they were mutually interested; that the doctor had promised to come up to the city that day or the next, and himself had

taken the evening train for London, and when he left had heard nothing of the murder. He also stated that, to the best of his knowledge and belief, the party who, in the first instance, assisted by his bull-dog, stole the handle of the knife, and afterwards posted up the bills, and afterwards sent a letter to Mr. Berrege advising him to *dig*, and afterwards called Mr. Berrege's attention to his patent burglar alarm, and afterwards tried to cure Mr. Ed. Downing of rheumatism and failed, and afterwards tried to cure the same party of itch and failed; that he was well acquainted with all of them, and believed them to be united in the person of your humble servant, N. Squelch, then present in court.

Mr. Squelch was asked if he had not been indirectly the means of the killing of a man at the time of the receipt of the 200£ in the cellar, and if he had not instigated these men to this act. His reply was that he had never, to the best of his belief, been directly or indirectly concerned in the killing of any one. That he had employed the help of the brotherhood in carrying out his plans, which had resulted in the detection and arrest of the real murderer; nothing more than this.

It is needless to state anything in addition, more than this simple fact, that Nicholas Squelch was discharged from custody, and Robert Keller condemned to swing for the commission of the crime of murder.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

EXPLANATIONS AND FINALE.

"Now the night is overpast,
And the mist is cleared away;
On my barren life at last
Breaks the bright, reluctant day.

Day of payment for the wrong
I was doomed so long to bear;
Day of promise, day of song,
Day that makes the future fair.

Let me wake to bliss alone,
Let me bury every fear;
What I prayed for is my own,
What was distant now is near.

For the happy hour that waits
No reproachful shade shall bring;
And I hear forgiving fates
In the happy bells that ring."

—*Bayard Taylor.*

In justice to the reader we must devote some space to the following explanations, necessary to the full understanding of this story:

A few days after the interview of the young lady with Mr. Berrege at Cozzen's Hotel, Mr.

Berrege was called upon by a man who requested a private interview, and as Mr. Berrege was very well accustomed to such interviews he took the gentleman aside to a private room connected with his office, expecting nothing more than the ordinary, threadbare routine of such interviews; but what was his surprise to find that this interview was to be with a dead man—or a man supposed to be dead; even the man whose murderer he was trying to overhaul.

He could not be mistaken in the identity of the man, although when he first threw off his disguise he was very much disposed to doubt the evidence of his own senses; but when Doctor Mortimer gave him a faithful account of the murder, as it has been given in these pages, he doubted no longer. Having already had his suspicions directed to Robert Keller, it did not take him long to complete the case, with the help that the doctor could afford him; and he promised to keep dark until the matter was entirely ready for the revelations that were made at the trial.

The reader will remember that upon the first appearance of Nicholas Squelch at Oldcroft Hall, he made a communication to Isabella Oldcroft. This communication was from

Dr. Mortimer, stating the exact circumstances as they occurred on the night of the murder, and his connection with it. From that time till the time of the trial the doctor was enabled to compare notes every few days with the lady of his love, Nicholas Squelch acting as the medium of communication, and thus they were prepared to appear at the trial, and each confirm the testimony of the other.

With regard to the love existing between this pure girl, this nice young lady, and Nicholas Squelch, it is only necessary to do now as we have done before, state the facts; they explain themselves when fully known.

The second wife of Ralph Oldcroft, and the mother of Isabella Oldcroft, had a sister named Emma, who, in spite of the wishes of her friends, married a man by the name of Squelch. This man was a respectable man, and engaged in a respectable business; but he did not come up to the mark that the high-bred, aristocratic family had set for their daughter, so there had been trouble. Refusal on the part of the parents; strong, devoted love on the part of the young girl, and in the end a runaway match. Emma had left her father's home forever.

Now, these sisters loved each other with

all the love of which sisters are capable of loving, and when Emma thus became separated from her sister, her sister never forgot her. She had never mentioned her name to old Ralph, but she had told her daughter, Isabella, all the circumstances, and on her death-bed had urged her to be very kind to this sister or her children if they ever met. They *had* met, in the manner stated,¹ and Nicholas, who was a perfect encyclopedia of names and family relationships, had, before his appearance at West Cove, learned that the sweet girl was his cousin. He loved her, of course he did, and Isabella loved him, of course she did, for all his devotion to her; there was no more serious aspect to the case than is implied in these facts.

The wretched man, Robert Keller, when he found he must die, made the following confession of the circumstances attending the commission of the bloody deed: At the time the young man, Ralph Oldcroft, went to Devonshire to sell the property, Robert Keller was deeply in debt; so much so that he had made his arrangements to leave the country. The idea occurred to him, or was put in his head by the evil one, that if he could obtain the money that the young man

was to bring back he would be relieved from his present troubles, permitted to stay where he was, to pay his debts and wear the appearance of an honest man, if only there was some way to do it without discovery.

Having once entertained the idea, he studied over it, and revolved the deed in every possible form. Not having decided to do it, but tampering with the temptation, he carried the knife with which the deed was done. He had not decided to do it at the time he left the Hall and walked in the direction that the young man would take if he returned from the station on foot, and was still hesitating, totally undecided, when he met his victim; but his indecision was at an end in a few moments after the meeting.

The young man had discovered some game lying on the ground as he passed a certain spot. Immediately upon seeing Robert Keller his wrath burst forth upon this individual for permitting the game to be killed, and letting things go to rack and ruin while he was absent. This was more than Robert Keller could bear; and indeed, more than most men would bear; or whatever might be said of Robert Keller, it could never be

said he was not a good overseer, and careful of his employer's interests.

Hot words followed. The place where the quarrel occurred was favorable to the accomplishment of the deed. There were now two strong impelling forces where before there had been but one. He drew near to the young man, looked around to see that no one was near, hissed in his ear the words: "You deserve to die, you ungrateful, lying villain," struck him a blow with his fist that prostrated him, and drawing the knife plunged it into his breast with such force as to snap the blade off near the handle. He had just time to secure the money before Richard Oldcroft approached; and running away he tripped and fell over the rope that held the snare, dropping the handle of the knife, which he had not time to recover.

A few days after the termination of the trial, a man arrived in London from Italy. This man was well known in the city, or used to be, but he was so changed now by exposure and roughing it in the open air, changed too for the better, that at first his friends did not recognize in this rugged, healthy looking man the senior partner of the firm of Feldkamp & Sosserole, who had

disappeared so mysteriously more than a year before. When he had convinced them of his identity with that individual, he gave a history of his adventures.

He had been carried to some point in Italy, and delivered to parties that he supposed were Italian bandits; for they lived in the mountains, and they talked of asking a large sum for his ransom. He had been well taken care of; had plenty of fresh air and exercise, and was in much better health than when he left England. But he declared his intention to prosecute, to the fullest extent of the law, the parties who had committed this unparalleled outrage—this attack upon the liberty of a citizen of England and member of parliament. But right at the outset he met with an insurmountable obstacle. He had no clue to the perpetrator of the outrage, absolutely none. He had his suspicions, even felt convinced he knew who had instigated and set on foot the whole thing, but he could do nothing for want of evidence. The fact of the case was, the parties who had carried him to Italy had placed him in the hands of the other parties in Italy to board, at so much per month until further orders; and the talk of asking any ransom

money was a blind to conceal their real purpose.

A few months after the return of the Honorable Mr. Feldkamp he received a delicately scented missive asking the pleasure of his presence at the wedding festivities of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Oldcroft, at Sea view. Again the member of parliament went through the same performances as he had by the rock at the summer house. He raved and tore around his room, used some bad language, and repeated the name of a place commencing with the letter "H," but which was not heaven, and made use of a word commencing with "D," but which was not duck; and that was all the notice he deigned to take of this very polite invitation.

There could be but one inference drawn from these facts. This man had grown proud since his travels in foreign parts. He had become too exalted for the society of West Cove.

On the fourth of May there was another party at Oldcroft Hall. Not a birthday party as before, but a wedding party this time. The high contracting parties being Richard Oldcroft and Isabella Oldcroft. This man and woman, who had loved wisely

and well, through weal and through woe, now promised to love, protect and cherish through life. And lights streamed from turret and tower, and music floated out upon the air, and fair women and brave men floated through the mazes of the dance, and this man, Richard Oldcroft, stood by the side of his blushing bride, master of all this wealth.

Did his thoughts recur to the time when he stood in this same room before, a wronged, insulted man? And he had said to the man who had wronged and insulted him: "I will go now, *but when I come again, you will not be master here.*" He *did* remember these words; he had uttered them in the heat of passion—as men do utter such words in the heat of passion—not intending to do this man any bodily injury, only intending to have that satisfaction, and in that sense that the world uses and understands the word satisfaction.

But another hand had struck the blow that made him master here. And he stood here now absolute master of all this wealth, and of all the joy and gladness coming in its train; and best of all, *master of himself*. He had done no act to bring himself to this position by which he lost his self-control, his

manhood, his self-respect, or his sense of justice and right. He had done no act tending to bring him to this position, except the act of winning the love of this beautiful being by his side, who was to be henceforth his partner for life.

And lights streamed from turret and tower, music floated out upon the breeze, and fair women and brave men floated through the mazes of the dance, and mirth, joy and gladness reigned supreme throughout Oldcroft Hall upon the night the new master came to claim his blushing bride; to claim that which was his by right of inheritance at first, and now was his by right of conquest.

THE END.

